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THE

BURGOMASTER OF BERLIN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

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THE BURGOMASTER OF BERLIN.

CHAPTER I.

THE old town of Brandenburg, at the time of the recommencement of our history, presented a scene of great bustle, particularly on the banks of the river; for the Havel was covered with deeply-laden boats, and crowds of workmen were employed on its shores, either carrying weights on their heads, or dragging two-wheeled trucks behind them, by ropes over their shoulders. The sweat ran down their foreheads as they toiled along, yet their labour was not unaccompanied by song, and they lifted their caps cheerfully when their employers happened to come by. Their masters most probably paid them well. When service is compelled, the workmen seldom meet their masters thus; they work like beasts of burthen, which stand still when they cease to feel the whip and spur.

The sun was already in the west. The roofs and

towers of the cathedral were glowing in the red evening light, and its windows glittering like gold and precious stones. From a distance its whole appearance was almost magical. The red light tinged also the waters of the Havel, a fine river, running every now and then into lakes, and full of excellent fish. Yes, it coloured even the boats on the water, and the figures of the boatmen and labourers. It appeared as if the evening was to be no time of rest for them. However, when the bell from the church tower tolled the vesper hour, the song at once ceased, the heavy-ho of the lifters was silent, the waggon-wheels creaked no more, and each load was put down just where the bearer stood. Each lifted his bonnet, and clasping their hands, they all knelt down, and uttered their Ave-Marias.

But soon as the bell had ceased, its last echo yet dying away in the evening air, the nervous limbs of the workmen—yes, and their throats too—were once again called into exercise. The wheel and windlass creaked once more, and the merry song and the heavy-ho seemed as if never to cease.

One who stood looking on, having just unclasped his hands from his evening prayer, was addressed by a burgess and tradesman, who had joined him: “A fine evening, Herr Niclas.”

“It is, indeed a fine evening, Master Perbant.”

“The proverb comes true—‘The day must not be reckoned on till the evening.’ And again—‘The day must not be quarrelled with for being dull, since the evening may be beautiful.’”

“Only, friend, we must not forget that night always comes next.”

“Herr Niclas Pernewitz,” said the other, “I care little about that. I would have people consider the evening not less delightful, because a stormy night may follow it. If I have a pleasant ramble in the evening, what do I care though it rain in the night; what I have got into my barns in the day can take no harm, whatever falls in the night; and I say, Herr Niclas, we want some fine evenings sadly in Brandenburg. The Berlin and Koeln people have taken the bread from our very mouths. Trade and commerce! What were they thirty, forty years ago? All is gone now towards the Spree. From Hamburg, from Stettin—the Berlin people have got it all. What would become of us, had we not our woollen-weavers and cloth-combers? The folk in Friar’s-street and Stralow-street are grown so fat, they can hardly squeeze into their doors, whilst we are become as lean as church mice.”

“Neighbour,” said Niclas, “church mice are God’s creatures, and none of the worst. They will certainly take rank in heaven above field mice, or barn-door mice, especially where there is a chapter and cathedral. Do you think that our clergy will not stand by us up yonder? My opinion is, that if the Berlin people get the start of us here, we shall fetch it up again. They have but a provost and a few priests, whilst we have a bishop.”

“Up yonder! God have mercy on us! Only I say, we should fetch it up here by good rights.

We were the oldest and most important town in the Mark."

"Are we not so still? Who disputes it? Does not the whole country take its name from us, as well as the principality, and the Mark-graf? Are they not called Brandenburg? Did not all the ordinances and statutes go out from us, and our laws obtain in the new towns? Do not our law courts rank with any others in the land? They who lack good counsel, are they not to come to us for it? Neighbour, neighbour, we should not cry ourselves down; and if we had nothing else, we should have at least the honour."

"Can one cover one's roof with that to keep out the rain? What do the punch-bellies in Koeln care about our honour or rank? We had not a rush's weight with them, when they were pulling one another by the lugs. You know that better than I do. I reckon my honour to be much or little, according to what I earn, and I therefore give honour to the Mark-graf, who gives me a chance of earning something."

"Spoken well, and as an honest burgess, and a good subject of the Mark-graf."

"Which latter personage you have also good occasion to praise, Herr Nielas, inasmuch as you have the whole order for the slates."

"Who says that I do not thank him for it? Let him build a palace in every town he has, and cover it with my slates. I'll thank him as many times as there are towns."

"But would the towns thank you for it?" said a

third, who had joined them. It was Master Bertold, of Dasseleben, a well known slater, who had to do the roof-work on the palace, which the Mark-graf was about to build at Koeln, on the banks of the Spree.

"They must—they must!" answered Herr Niclas.

"It is my notion," said Herr Bertold, "that the towns will make as many wry faces at him for the roofs which he would build over their heads, as ever the nobles did for his pulling their roofs about their ears."

"And if they do make wry faces at one another," asked Master Perbant, "what difference will that make to us?"

"Why, we are one of them."

"But we want no prince's palace here," cried Perbant, "for we have a cathedral and bishop's see, and the church of the Holy Maria on Marienberg. That couldn't exist with any seat of secular authority at its side. It would be absurd."

"The Koeln and Berlin people may just say the same—that they stand in no need of it. They made queer faces, I tell you, when our first load of slates landed there. All sorts of fun they made of them. 'What were slates for?' they asked: 'were they for the boys to learn to reckon on? Because, if they were, the Mark-graf had miscalculated them.' Others said, he had sent them for the people to play at duck and drake with, on the water, only there were too many, he might perhaps get a splinter from one of them into his eye. And when

I unloaded them under the Long Bridge, the lads about set to scuffling and playing, and running against my carriers, and through their legs, so that many a load fell down, and broke. It was no good scolding; they only laughed the more, and said it was our fault. If I threatened them with the authorities, they only made faces, and one of them pointed to the weathercock, and said, 'From west-north-west I might perhaps hope for a fair decision, but from east and south, and all that lay between, I should do the best to keep a quiet tongue in my head.'

" 'We know them of old,' said the others.

"And then they shouted, we shouldn't reckon without our host, nor put the roof on before the walls were built. And they looked as wilful as if there were no master over them in the land. God knows what will be the end of it!"

"Oh! that they will shout, that you will build, and that the Kurprince will pay!"

"You should have seen Hans Ferbitz, the barber, on the Long Bridge, when they pulled his house down. He ran about like a wild creature, and made as if he would pull the ladders from under the builders. How the man did curse the senate, the town, and the Mark-graf!"

"The senate will have to pay him its value—will it not?"

" 'Oh!' he said, 'that was dirt—'twas rubbish, for a right which had been his and his fathers' fathers. How were his children and his children's

children to get their bread ?' He called the senators asses, and the commonalty the same, for letting it be done ; and what he called the Mark-graf !—nay, I would rather not repeat it. There the little man stood, shaking his fists at the senate-house, whilst the foam stood on his lips : ' Oh, ye oxen, could I but lather and shave you as ye deserve, for your stupidity and injustice, your beards would never trouble you again—ye blind fools, not seeing what ye do ! But only wait, there is another coming to lather you and shave you ! There will be a booth built here where ye will be cropped, and bathed, and shaved, and bled, till all your five senses are gone ; a booth that will look over your heads like the Tower of Babel—yes, it will look into your senate-house, and into your bed-rooms, into your hen-roosts and your secret places, into your weak parts and your shame. Oh, ye will wish that ye had let Hans Ferbitz's booth alone where it was—yes, if ye could build it again, ye would yourselves carry the timbers and sharpen the nails. But it will be too late, the big house will not be as easy to pull down as Ferbitz's booth—it will be a stone of offence to you for ever. And rightly, rightly, a thousand times rightly will ye be served, because ye have not defended my right, which it was for you to defend and stand up for !' That was the way the enraged man went on shouting."

" A prince's will is hard to digest. Who likes to have to cut against the grain ?"

" But the Berlin people seem about to do so,"

continued the other. "Who would ever suffer such language as that? But they let him go on, and no one ever said a word."

"It must look queer, then," said Master Perbant; "no one knows who is top and who is bottom."

"It is no wonder," said Niclas Pernewitz; "their wit runs loose about the streets, now that the barber's booth is gone. But you know there is an old saying—

" 'What the Berlin folk say
Isn't always done the same day.' "

At this they laughed, and continued their talk about the Berlin people in a friendly tone. Very little could they find to say that was good; the Frankfort, and Bernow, and Prenzlów people said much the same of Berlin. But we must remember what the old Grecian said—"that if every town swept its sweepings together, and all these sweepings were to be placed side by side, and some one should say 'Choose,' each town would certainly choose to have its own sweepings again."

The night began to fall, the work ceased, and the citizens betook them towards home. The workmen greeted Niclas Pernewitz as he passed them, and the young lads tried to catch his eye, for he was much beloved of all, and had promised them a feast when the job was finished.

"It all comes into your pocket," said the slater; "the work people are merry, whilst ye are the only persons who are not so, or, at any rate, Niclas Pernewitz is not what he used to be."

“ There may be a reason for it,” answered Pernewitz, “ just as there is for everything else on the earth.”

“ A reason which does not content itself with the earth, but aims at being eighty or a hundred feet higher.”

Master Perbant left them ; and the other two in their way passed the yard where the slaters’ tools, and implements stood ready loaded for the journey.

“ All this comes into your pockets, master, and you may put down double in the bill for all that the lads in Berlin break for you. How is it that you are not more cheerful, for you will earn a mass of money ?”

Master Bertold smiled : “ There may be a reason for it, just as there is for everything else in the world.”

“ And ambition is not your reason ?” asked the Brandenburger.

The slater looked somewhat askance at the senator : “ No, the reason is, the depths of your pockets, ye gentry of Brandenburg—for if the Prince had not made it a condition,* that I must get all my slate from you, besides all that I want in the way of nails, spikes, and smith-work, I could get them cheaper anywhere else.”

“ Oh, you extortioner, won’t you let us be paid for our trouble ?”

“ And for your kindness to the Mark-graf, in stopping your ears, whilst your allies in Koeln and Berlin hold out their hands to you for help.”

* In existing records.

“They don’t deserve any better,” said Niclas, somewhat at a loss; “we all receive according to our deserts.”

“And one hand washes the other,” answered the slater. “Well, well; but it has often struck me. Suppose all hands were free, and everybody could work as he liked, and buy and sell how and where he chose, what money might be earned then in the world!”

The Brandenburg senator opened his eyes! “Why, you good man, everything would be savage again then! Where would be the justice of——”

“You mean the justices!”

“I mean the guilds and corporations—our right of staple and bonded warehouses. Master Bertold, see! our Roland stands yonder. It is well that he is of stone, and cannot hear you—why, you want to turn the world upside down! Every man to buy and sell as he likes, and go his way here, and to that market there, just as pleases him! Holy Saint Maurice! perhaps you mean that the Jews should too; and that the nobility should go to Hamburg as corn-dealers, as they used to do! Oh, the world would stand on its head then, and the towns be done away with! No rights and privileges! Heaven and earth, man, don’t let us hear that again! Why, you would have knob-sticks in, and people that hadn’t served their time. I hope you are not such a one.”

“God forbid!” said the slater; “I was made a master in Erfurt. The new roof on the cathedral testifies to my work; and as to knob-sticks, let one

come in my way, he will find his soup oversalted."

"Ergo," said the senator, laying a heavy hand on the other's shoulder; "don't you look up into the skies, you may chance to fall off the roof. A slater who would roof as high as you want to do, would have nowhere to put his pegs on—take notice of that. Let everybody sweep before his own door. Your road lies that way, and mine this."

As the senator took his way home in a meditative mood, he met the Bishop Stephen riding with some attendants, and doffed his bonnet, as was the custom on meeting so exalted a personage. The Bishop stopped and beckoned him to come near, for Niclas Pernewitz was highly thought of through the country, and received at the Bishop's court.

"Dear, dear! my good friend," said the very reverend father, "what strange news we hear again from Koeln yonder. It is impossible, of course, to say what it means; but still I wanted to caution you, as a good tradesman, to be on your guard. There is something wrong in those towns. They say, too, the Mark-graf is much enraged against them. God alone knows where it will end! The nobles want nothing more than war with Pomerania, and an unsettled state of things in the country."

Niclas Pernewitz kissed the skirt of the bishop's garment, and thanked him for the friendly warning. "God only knows, reverend sir, what will come of

it; but this I know, that the Mark-graf has one head, and the people in the towns have a thousand."

The bishop nodded his head, and continued his ride; and Herr Pernewitz proceeded slowly to his house. But when once over his threshold, he greeted all his old domestics as cheerfully as if he had thrown all anxiety aside; and in the same way he kissed and caressed his good wife, who might well be nearly as old as himself, and had dimples in her cheeks, and a body almost as stout as her lord's. But he said all kinds of sweet things to her, just as if she was still a young wife, and whispered things into her ear, at which she laughed, and pretended to scold him; and then he got hold of her arm with one hand, and putting the other round her waist, he made her dance with him across the room, till the servants had to put their hands to their mouths to avoid laughing out. He then threw himself, out of breath, into his great arm-chair, and wiped the perspiration from his brow, whilst she did the same.

"But, good man," said she, "you should remember that we are not quite as young as we were."

"Hum, hum!" he murmured.

"And what will people say? We have no children——"

"That is just why it is. If we had little people playing about our knees, it might be time, Cordula, to look serious, and put on grave faces. But, now that we are alone, give me your hand, Cordula.

Where do you read that an old man should not remain young? Quite the contrary. King David danced, and Solomon and——”

“ You mean, that because——”

“ Because what? That we should put on faces like Roland, or mourn and howl like funeral people. And why, Cordula? Funeral mourners get paid for mourning—who would give us anything? And whom would you rather go through the grove with—with one who turns up his eyes and looks as grave as a judge, or one who sings merry songs to you. Grave people, I know, find fault with the merry; but, trust me, it is only envy.”

“ But they say, that in these bad times——”

“ One should pile lead upon one’s shoulders to get through them easier? No, no, we should be merry! See now, Cordula, there are many sorts of people. First, the saints: God be with them, and glorify them in his mercy. They deserve it better than we do, for we are no saints—are we, Cordula? He knows best why he has not made saints of us. Then there are the bad people. You are not bad, nor am I. Let us be thankful to God that we are not. But, in the third place, there are those who are not saints, nor yet wicked people,—such as we are. God knows very well why he made such as us; perhaps that the world might not look so dreadfully serious. If he were to see nothing but very good people and very bad ones, why his own creation would hardly please him. Does not the Saviour say that we should be as children?

And what do children do ? They are joyful, and they sing and play. Well now, Cordula, why should we not sing and play ? When Time comes with his scythe, and mows us all down, old and young together, do not you think that cheerful people will go to heaven rather than melancholy ones ? And so let us be like children till that time comes, and let us rejoice. So give me a kiss, wife, and then fill me a cup full, for I am thirsty."

Herr Niclas received both the kiss and the cup, and then his wife decked the round oak table, and drew it before her lord and master's chair. Next she tied a white cloth under his chin, and brought everything within reach, that he might be comfortable. She pushed a footstool under his feet, and bolstered the back of his chair, that he might sit upright, and yet have something to lean against. And to see how cleverly the glasses and cups, the plates, the dishes, and the jugs were arranged on the table ! A person not hungry would certainly have acquired an appetite, the sight would have pleased him so ; but when the first course had come on the table, with its smoking dishes, his mouth would actually have watered. But still, savoury and dainty as the dishes looked, the pleasantest thing to behold after all was the beaming face of Herr Pernewitz, as his eye gloated upon the dainties, before hand or lip had touched them. It was a pleasure for all who saw it, his servants as well as his wife. When he clasped his hands to say grace, they all said it after him, he loud and they low down ; and then, as he began to eat of

this dish and to eat of that, and shewed his satisfaction, they also were happy, and stood watching his looks, to hand him all he wanted before he could express his wants.

Frau Cordula was the most happy of all at seeing her husband pleased ; but where was there a woman who could stand by her side in the kitchen ? Not that she was conceited, as some women are, thinking that what they have learnt from their mothers, and these again from their mothers, must be right, and must not be altered ; and find fault, too, if their husbands put their noses through the kitchen-door to give an opinion. Silly women ! for a man has a palate too, and generally more opportunities of pampering it than they have. Frau Cordula was one who would take advice, and was not angry even when Herr Pernewitz himself put on the apron, to shew her what he had seen on the Markgraf's table. Yes ; she had more than once begged privately from Herr Heinrich Czeuschel the receipt of some dish which her husband had praised, and surprised him by setting it before him on his own table. Shew me another wife like she was.

Herr Niclas acknowledged his wife's worth, and they lived as happily together as ever a couple betwixt the Havel and the Spree. At the supper table he always sat alone, for she preferred waiting upon him ; it was more pleasure to her to see him enjoying himself than to sit and eat with him ; for her heart was as good as her skill in cooking was great. Now, no one deserved a good wife more than Herr Pernewitz ; for it was a pleasure to see

him eat. He did not swallow down God's precious gifts like a cormorant; no, he took time, and made loving eyes at every mouthful; and, whenever he came to a choice bit, he talked in a most edifying manner about nature, and God, and his country! Then, to see him carve partridges or woodcocks, how daintily he separated the limbs with his hand and knife! But one should have seen him eat an Oder crab, leaving nothing but the shell: none surpassed him in cleanliness and speed! He was quite the wonder of all the guests when he dined at the Prince's table—on occasions of the Diet, for instance—and one time the Princess herself ordered a whole dish of crawfish to be set before him, and he had emptied his plate before any of the others had emptied theirs; yet not one of them had fed himself in so mannerly a fashion.

And he knew what drinking was,—who could doubt that for a moment of a German man? But it was not his wont to pour sweet wine down his throat, like many a Ritter, who swallowed it as if it were water thrown into a burning house. He tasted what he drank, even to the shutting of his eyes; and there were treasures in his cellar, such as were nowhere else, save in the council-house vaults at Bremen. But never did he drink a cup, not even when alone, without naming something to drink to, and when he had no one to drink with, he drank to the bottle, always being prepared with pleasant toasts.

To-day, he drank the first cup to his wife, Cor-dula, and a second to the same, and also the third.

The first to her loyalty, the second to her good looks, which he said, as she let her eyes fall bashfully, were to be seen through all the marks of time; and the third cup was to the wish that she would remain with him until his death, ever the same as she had been since their wedding day. With that, she put her apron to her eyes to wipe them; but that was what Herr Niclas could not bear to see, so he bade her come to him, and taste the sweet wine, and sit down close by him.

And now he began in earnest with his toasts and sentiments. One after another he drank to the towns of Old and New Brandenburg, the senators, the burgomaster, his own relations, the Bishop Stephen, and then to the Mark-graf, and with this last he partly stood up, and right merry he was, and of good heart, and everything around looked cheerful and smiling—all but the face of his good wife.

“What is the matter now, Cordula? Do not the good people deserve to be drank to in a good glass of wine?”

“O yes, Niclas, and more too; but I was just thinking how many of our fellow-creatures, good Christians, are in sorrow and suffering all the time, that we are so merry!”

“Quite right! I drink to all who are in sorrow and suffering,” said Niclas, with sufficient seriousness.

“That is right, Niclas; but not one of them gets a drop for all that.”

“Oh, Cordula! my cellar is full! You are a good

soul, and will bring me up enough ; I will drink to every one of them !”

“ Yet it seems to me as if it was not quite right of us ; for, much as you drink to the poor, the poor get nothing by it.”

“ Well, well ; you are right again. But do you know”—and with that he pulled her closer to him, “ The right hand should not know what the left doeth ; but man and wife are one. Your right hand is my right hand—is it not ? The order for the new palace in Koeln will bring a good round sum into our chest, and at the end of the year, when I take stock, I will put by double what I usually do for the poor, and the sum will not be small, Cordula, and you shall be my almoner.”

“ Oh, you are my good man ! The poor in Brandenburg will pray for you indeed, as they do already ! But——”

“ What ! another ‘ but ’ ?”

“ Why, only think—suppose we could even knit woollen stockings for all the poor in Brandenburg, how many would be still going about the world barefoot !”

“ I am a senator of Brandenburg, Cordula, and not a senator of the world ! God takes charge of the world.”

“ Yes, truly, he protects the poor. But, Niclas, think of the poor exiles !—without house and home !—no bed, and no roof, whilst we are here so snug ! And how many of them are known to us, and friends of ours !”

The senator sat a moment silent ; he then filled

two smaller glasses with cordial Rhine wine ; one he handed to his wife, the other he took himself, saying, with a solemn air—

“To all who are in exile !”

And they knocked their glasses together, and the pure ring of the glass rejoiced them both—even Frau Cordula emptied her glass to the very bottom.

“That they may do well !”

“Niclas, can they do well in exile ? Oh, Father in heaven !—to think of them, poor creatures, far away ! Oh, I think about them every night when they close our gates, and I wonder where they lay their heads—they that are outside ! The wolves and the bears, the many thieves and robbers ! Oh dear ! oh dear !—the market people have dreadful tales to tell us !”

“Dear wife, Brandenburg is a fair city, and strong, and we may thank God that we dwell within its walls. But there are many towns in the world besides Brandenburg, and many lands beyond the Mark where the people dwell secure ; and there is a God, and there are holy saints, who watch over those towns and distant lands, as well as over ours.”

“Perhaps you are right ; but still, to be away, is to be away ; and a holy saint away from here—who knows if he can understand our poor banished people ! They don’t talk German, you know, everywhere ; and only think, if we had a boy, who was obliged to wander in exile, without father or mother to complain to if he should be hungry ! Who would there be to wash for him, and to mend his

clothes, if they were torn ? Oh, holy Virgin ! when I only remember our nephew, Henning, when he called here, how heated he was, and yet so pale and wild-looking, and dared not stay with us, though you begged him. And he has gone into exile, and we have not heard of him since !”

“ Poor Henning !” sighed the senator.

“ Oh, those Berlin people ! to send the finest boy away they had in the town !”

“ They would be glad to have him back now.”

“ It is too late now, dear husband. He has been eaten by the wolves, and his bones are lying no one knows where. Oh, our Saviour ! without confession and absolution ! Oh, he was such a hearty, good lad.”

“ Not one who would let the first best wolf eat him. He looked to me more likely to kill the first dozen.”

“ Or, perhaps some illness has taken him off ; he has died, perhaps in some hospital, where they took him in for the love of God ; and, perhaps, he lies buried in some village churchyard, without a stone or a cross over his head. Oh, those people of Berlin ! I say again——”

“ Well, but they have had to suffer for it, Cordula. Or, would you like to exchange with them ? Are not they badly enough off ?”

“ Yes, Nielas, one might well shed tears of blood over them. There is a sad deal of misery in the world.”

“ Then they ought to thank God, and be cheer-

ful, who live as we do, safe and snug in our good town of Brandenburg."

"Amen, amen!"

"Well then, Cordula, just another glass,—that they who are in exile may die a happy death."

Just as they again knocked their glasses together, there came a gentle pull at the house-door bell. The burghers' bell had rung, and a ring at the bell, or a knocking, at such an hour, had an unnatural sound. Job's news comes in the night time; good news chooses the day. The upright comer pulls hard at the bell-pull; the evil one scarcely tightens the wire.

"Do not open the door!" said Cordula, beseechingly.

"Why, my good wife? Have we not been drinking to the unfortunate, and suppose there should be one lying on our threshold. Are we to let him pine there? What would you say, should we open the door in the morning, and find it too late to bring him in?"

A maid-servant hastened to the door at the nod of her master, and returned speedily. She said there was no need for alarm, for the comer was an old man, feeble and with white hair. He wished to say a single word to the owner of the house. There was nothing to fear from him, for he seemed faint, as off a long journey; yet he looked like one who had seen better days.

"Yet one cannot answer for it," put in Cordula, looking anxiously in her husband's face.

“But I can answer,” said Niclas, “what a good senator ought to do when a poor man knocks at his door,” and pushing back the table, he stood up, and nodded to the maid to bring the stranger in.

“You are right,” said Cordula, somewhat ashamed of her fear. “But I thought, that as the gates have been closed so long ago, how is it he comes to us so late? He might have come when the bell rang, and then we might have seen his face, and known who he was.”

“But it strikes me, Cordula, that he may be come just now, that every one may not see his face, and know who he is. He wants Niclas Pernewitz to see him, and no one else, and that is why I let him in. But you may stay, because you are my true wife.”

CHAPTER II.

THE maid did as she was bid. For the old man, though his clothes were torn, telling of rough weather, and though his shoes were dusty and his face full of sorrow, yet every one could see he was no beggar, nor a vagabond, such as lie by day-time in the ditches, and only wander forth when it is dark. His step was firm, and his eye was steady, and knew how to look straight before it.

“Johannes Rathenow!” burst from the lips of both at the same moment.

“Johannes! Johannes!” said Niclas, hastening to meet him, and seizing his hand, “is it thus I see you again?”

“And you recognise me again even thus?”

And they shook each other by the hand, and a sorrowful expression was on the countenances of both, as they looked each other in the face.

“God be with you, Frau Cordula; you little expected such a guest.”

Frau Cordula burst into tears, and took his hand in both of hers : “ Oh ! dear Johannes, these are sorry times, when such a man as you has to knock in this way at his friend’s door.”

“ The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away,” was his answer. “ But of this afterwards. So you will not turn me away.”

“ Mother of God !” she cried, “ are we Turks and pagans, instead of good Brandenburg people and true friends of yours ? Oh, Johannes ! why did you not come to us before ? Here we have been mourning and lamenting, and not knowing where you were. But you are hungry and tired. Oh, sit down directly, I will get everything for you. Sit down ; wine, meat, I will fetch you everything myself, and you shall have a bed soft and warm—but only sit down.”

Johannes Rathenow sat him down in the arm-chair which Niclas had occupied before, and he took the offered glass of wine.

“ Thanks, thanks, good friends, for this cordial drink ; and still more thanks be given that I find you ever the same, so much is changed in the world. But I am not as hungry and tired as I look to be, and all my clothes are not as bad as is this outside cloak of mine,” he added, with a faint smile. “ I have been housed some time in the little inn beside the gate, only waiting till it was dark.”

“ Oh, merciful Father ! the Herr von Rathenow—he who was burgomaster in the great town of

Berlin, to have to wait for the night to seek the house of his friends !”

“ But is it not so ?” asked Johannes, and he looked his host full in the face.

“ Let the Koeln and the Berlin people rage against you as they like, and send out their ban and outlawries as much as they like, you are safe in Niclas Pernewitz’s house,” answered Niclas.

“ But what does he say as senator of Old Brandenburg ? He has to do as the town bids him, and the town has to do what the Mark league bids it do.”

“ The towns’ league !” answered Niclas. “ The towns’ league has more heads than one town ; it cares little for such a matter ; it only received the news from Berlin relating the circumstance. Yes, if you had come here to complain, it might have been another thing, for many here were surprised and vexed about it ; but you were silent, and went uncomplaining into exile, without a word or any deed. Well, if you took it silently, why should we make a noise about it ? Let him complain who suffers. Good heavens, Johannes, but you managed badly !”

“ Perhaps I did, Niclas.”

“ You did, indeed—may God forgive you ; for when not a single attorney spoke for you——”

“ No one spoke for me !”

“ And you to fly no one knew where ! The towns were compelled, unwillingly as they did it, to publish the ban against you, for you did not

appear to their summons. They were forced to do it, and unanimously ; it could not be otherwise."

"And to have done that—is that nothing?" said Johannes. "Have I not made them for once do a thing unanimously—just *for once*, since the league was entered into?"

"But you might——"

"Have appeared—brought a plea—complained—made myself a party, and divided the towns even more than they were divided! Oh, yes, Niclas Pernewitz! I might, perhaps, have had justice done me by two, perhaps—perhaps by ten! It may be that the Brandenburgers, or they of Bernow, had borne me back to my town, restored my property to me—even placed me again in the burgomaster's chair! Think you that I was angry? I, who had to fly like a thief—I, who love my town—I, who was in the right? I was angry; I felt as if I would have turned all upside down; but, thanks be to God, I did not do it! Who had gained by such doing, and who suffered? It had but wanted that to have set the towns by the ears, and the measure would have been full, and the enemy taken the little that still remained to us. No; Johannes Rathenow shewed them, not by words—no; by the deed he shewed them that they were unjust in calling him a traitor! Thus no one has suffered save himself."

The Brandenburger senator looked at him for a moment with a sympathizing look, and then pressing his hand, he said, "And as far as in me lies, they shall do you justice yet."

But Frau Cordula very judiciously remarked that all this could be settled better some time else, for there would be such a day as to-morrow. The board was already spread, and though he did not say so, yet it might be seen in their worthy guest's face that it was a long time since he had eaten and drank in a house like theirs. And away ran the good wife, heavy as she was of foot, first up stairs and then down stairs, to get a meal ready, such as was beseeming so worthy a guest; and drink and eat he was obliged to do, she hardly suffering him to speak a word between the mouthfuls.

Meanwhile, Herr Pernewitz was assuring him that he was as safe where he was as he could be even in the sanctuary, for none, save the girl who opened the door, knew of his arrival, and she was true as steel. He should stay with them as long as he chose, and till he was quite restored, for they would like to see the person in Old Brandenburg who dare intrude in Pernewitz's house.

"I know your goodness well," said Herr Johannes; and again he gave him his hand, for he was the better for the food and the wine. "A true friend is, indeed, a precious good."

"And had you not *one* left on the banks of the Spree?"

The guest shook his head.

"That is what so surprised us all here."

"It did not surprise me," murmured Herr Johannes, sunk in contemplation.

"They are only false friends who turn faint

when Mistress Fortune turns her back. And you who have gone through so much, should, at least, have made yourself some few real friends."

"If the worm is once in the wood, who can cleanse it out? Each deed that we do scatters its seed, but it is the bad seed which takes root. What had I done? What had the common people done that I must be forced to deal harshly with them? Had it not been begun by my grandfather Albert? My dealings were, I thought, honest; but who can turn back the sun—who can interfere with the flight of time? How could I be innocent when the blood of Albertus ran in my veins?"

"But when they sent to Spandow to accuse you, you should have accused them in return."

"Why should I have done it in return?"

"Self-defence is law everywhere; it is a law of nature. Not a single sensible man could have blamed you for that."

"But I should have blamed myself, Niclas Pernewitz; for if I had not attached my name to the petition, would the Prince, do you think, have come?"

"Who can tell?" said the Brandenburger, in a low tone.

"I can tell, and that the fault was mine. It was I who bade him come, for in that moment I was weak, and anger overcame me. Oh, my friend! when I was wandering outside yonder without a roof over my head, oftentimes when I looked on the hand that wrote my name that day, I thought I

could not do better than lay it on a block and strike it off."

"But if you had not written, would the trades have ridden the less to Spandow—would the Koeln patricians have turned back? You did what you could not help doing. Indeed, it might otherwise have turned out worse; you would have had both against you. The guilds would have shouted against you; the Koeln people and your enemies in the senate, would have set them on; you would have been slain on the very stairs of the senate-house!"

"Then I should have fallen in my right, and have been laid with my fathers."

"But you were not in the right."

"Who can tell? Oh, Pernewitz! governing is a difficult thing! It is as with a deep well: one drinks without knowing where the many waters come from; and if it dries up one knows not where the waters are. Before those days, when I was chosen by them, I knew what my right was, and whence it sprung, and I went straight forward, conscious that each step was straight. But when the Mark-graf placed me where I was, I lost my track; and when they called me to the right, or called me to the left, my head was unsteady, and I looked to one side and the other. May God keep from us a power, the origin of which is unknown to us!"

"All power is from God," said Herr Pernewitz.

"Whatever I said in the council, the senators

cried—‘He is the spokesman for the Mark-graf!’ and the citizens soon joined in the cry.”

“The Mark-graf had given you your office.”

“And they were in the wrong. Was it any longer their town, their rights? Oh, Herr Pernewitz! I could not speak otherwise, I could not act otherwise than I did! But my heart revolted against it; I was forced to contradict them, to do contrary to their will. I was forced to punish them, whilst my heart was yearning over them!”

“Any one may know that your position was a difficult one.”

“And even the Mark-graf had no justice done him in the matter. There came notice upon notice, and letter upon letter; and whenever I shewed my face, there arose whispers: ‘He is no burgomaster of ours, he is the Mark-graf’s steward.’”

The two sat a moment silent. But Herr Johannes took another refreshing draught of wine, and then he continued:—

“When the prince demanded the mills in Mill-dam-street, I rode myself to Spandow. It is true, that, in former times, they were the property of the lord of the land, but still they now belonged to the town; we had them granted to us by the Bavarian line. When I was there, I said all I could, used every argument on the towns’ side. I said it would be against every interest to deprive the citizens of what had been their fathers’ fathers’. The prince’s councillors alleged that we had forfeited the right, by damming up the waters against the will of the

prince. Ten of them against me with their Latin statutes—what could I do? They referred to their parchments, and their law books, and determined that, according to the imperial law, the right of the prince in regard to his subjects could never perish, and that what had been lost by temporary weakness, might be resumed again, when the ability returned. I could not get to speak to the Kurprince himself. On my way home, as I rode over the bare heath, the sighing of the pine trees sounded in my ears like my requiem.”

“It was at that time that the millers’ men broke your windows.”

“They did but what their masters told them to do. But that was not the worst day. But, to be sure, it was then that all my friends forsook me, the Wyns, Bruck, Strobant: for all of them had some share in the mills. What was I not forced to listen to from the old senate? That I was throwing away the town’s rights, like an unprincipled agent; that, because I was not wealthy myself, I was unconcerned about the ruin of all the rich houses. But in the new senate! Bad as the old one was, they in the new one would listen to no reason at all. One disputed against the other, no one understood what another said, and every one was without confidence, because no one could understand at all about it.”

“But how could they learn to understand it? You kept them back when they sought to learn.”

“Because the right of giving council was our

right, from our fathers down. We had no right to yield that which was our fathers', and that which was to be our children's."

"And that was why you held on as long as you could, till your grasp was torn away at once, and you were carried away, just as when pent waters break loose. If you had but opened the sluices a little, and given way a little, you might have directed the others just as you chose; but at last you were obliged to go, just as you were carried."

"We did what was our duty."

"And exile was your fate in consequence."

"But I took with me the consciousness that I had not swerved from the right."

"A pretty consciousness. The beggar's wallet could not be filled by it."

"Think you, then, that they who remain, fare the better for it? They who bargain, and bargain, and negotiate: who have daily to hear things which drive the blood to their faces? Who have daily to endure contumely, and yet have to smile and return thanks for it?"

"Yet you know that the patricians have the government yet, just as they had before. It is true that the shoemakers and cobblers shout in the council chamber, but the strings that pull them are in the hands of the patricians. Nothing is ever determined on, but just what they will. They who are knowing and rich ever have their will, though they may not sit on the benches. If you had but managed a little more carefully—if you had not willed that the camel should go through the

needle's eye—had you but pulled the strings one at a time, you might have been in authority this day."

At this, Johannes Rathenow rose from his chair, "I had not been Johannes Rathenow, my father's son, to have done it." And, as he walked the room, he continued: "What has been the result? Are they better off, they who take ten crooked steps, where I had taken one straight one? Is the town the better for it? Do they agree better? Are they on better terms with the other towns? Are they stronger against the Mark-graf? Does his powerful arm grasp less tightly their ancient rights? What is expedience in comparison with right? It is a staff which breaks when one would lean on it."

The Brandenburg senator seemed little satisfied with this, but he made no reply. He was not willing, perhaps, to take away the last prop on which the old man leaned. For what was passing in Johannes' mind was, how he had been sneered at; how he had been hurled down the senate stairs; how the cry of blood had been raised against him in every street; and how he had been obliged to escape from the town in disguise, under cover of night. But his heart seemed now for once again to have gained strength, as the recollection of what had passed came before him. It was long since he had met one to whom he could speak freely. He sat down again, and he talked further, as much seemingly to himself as to his friendly host:—

"The days which followed it were fearful. The

quiet was more unendurable than the storm which preceded it. I read in every face what was the opinion about me. In the rolling of every cart, the tolling of every bell, I fancied I heard the grumbling of the citizens. In my own house, too, I saw nought but the eyes of my Elizabeth, red with weeping, the cast down looks of my dependents, the moanings and sighings of old Gertrude. Their silence was but out of respect for me. Had they spoken loud as the drum and the trumpet, I should have liked it better. Oh, such reserve as that, creeps through one's veins! It chills one's blood! One can defend oneself against an enemy who comes openly—against a secret one, one is as a child. They whispered that it was I—I, Johannes Rathenow—who had betrayed the towns into the Mark-graf's hand—that I had nurtured dissension through my agents, and sent them to Spandow to complain. It was my doing, the coming of the Mark-graf, the bursting of the gates, the alteration of the governing power. It was plain enough that it was so; for I, I alone, the only one amongst the patricians, was chosen burgomaster. All the rest meant well with the town. I alone, who had spoken against it, was chosen."

"A base malicious slander! But who gave credit to it?"

"Slander, Herr Pernewitz, is like a snake. Who can grasp it? When one would seize it, it is gone. My enemies spread it about, the crowd swallowed it greedily, and—and—they had cause. My grandfather, Albertus, was one to have acted so." And

after a pause, he continued : “ All that the Markgraf would have the towns do, I had to do. I was the one to bring it before the senate. All their abuse was spent upon me, for I was the advocate. I had to bear all the ill will which the towns bore to their lord, for their answers had to go through me. One evening there came to me the Barons Kracht and Schliefen, with designs and sketches, and they brought an architect from the court, and, without any notice, out it came, that the Prince was about to build a palace on the Spree, and how much ground he required—all the space between the Long Bridge and the town walls. There had been a rumour about it before, but I had given no credence to it. ‘ Good gentlemen,’ I said, ‘ in the name of God and his saints, I pray you do not do it! Advise his gracious highness to relinquish such an idea. There is ill blood enough amongst us already, The Prince’s building a tower opposite the senate-house, with its roofs and turrets, would look like an enemy’s camp in the midst of us. The towns will not, the towns cannot allow it; not, at least, just at this moment. It will be all over with them.’ At this, Kracht shouted fiercely : ‘ And it ought to be all over with them!’ And Schliefen laughed; ‘ The towns will, and must allow it!’ I said everything. God knows what I said! I meant it well, but it displeased them. I said that no Prince had ever taken up his abode within our walls, with man and horse; that we were friends, and not enemies; that the Koeln people would never agree to it, for the land was theirs, and so

were the houses which stood on it. At this, Kracht struck me on the shoulder with his steel glove, and shouted, 'Are you the Prince's servant, or the towns'?' And Schliefen stamped with his spurred foot, and beat his hand on the designs which were on the table, and said, 'The castle is to stand just where his grace has chosen to have it, and it is goodness enough to expect of him that he allows your miserable dog-kennels to exist beneath it.' I shouted for assistance, and my servants came, for I thought the knights were about to ill-treat me. But they wrapped them in their cloaks, and rode away, threatening, and talking of revolt. I could come to no explanation with them."

"A couple of noble gentlemen!" said the Brandenburger; "the Prince might have chosen more fit messengers."

"We had other ones amongst ourselves," answered the guest, with a sigh. "When the news spread over the town, they poured upon me from all sides; they were like men beside themselves. The town was to bear the disgrace, which was thus inflicted upon their magistrate. I would not have it to be so, and so I appeared before the senate. Directly I took the Mark-graf's part, they all cried: that it was clear that he and I were in one boat. Yet the very people who asserted this were as silent as mice when, the next day, I stood before the senate. Well, I talked and talked about the Mark-graf's requirement; how that it was a straining of right, and how that we ought to represent the matter to him respectfully, and tell him that the

ground within the boundaries belonged to the town, and not to the lord of the land, and that he ought to withdraw his request. First, they were silent, and then a low grumbling arose from one and another. They said, 'It was now too late; it was not wise to draw his indignation upon them. What could be hoped as the result of such expostulation? We should have taken our ground earlier.' It made me angry. Who was it who spoke when there was yet time to speak? That was just what they wanted, to bring me into collision with them; and now they shouted louder than I did. Blankenfelde's party shewed themselves at the back of it all. Oh, Herr Pernewitz! the reproaches they uttered against me!—yes, they were wide of the mark; but they cut deep. They asked if I was perhaps the only one who had a right to speak? Did I want to be the lawgiver and the Castellan? Whether they were to obey the Mark-graf because it was my pleasure, when it was not theirs? It was in vain that I represented to them that there was still time to expostulate, but if a stone should once be laid, and the walls once be rising, it would then be rebellion. They would listen to nothing. They cried out I wanted to cause a quarrel between them and the Mark-graf. Hans Moeve, of Koeln, shouted out, 'We hold our lands in fee of the Mark-graf! Rathenow wants us to forfeit them, and I know a certain person who might turn his coat, if there was anything to gain by it!' Could I be patient then, Herr Pernewitz?"

"There is a saying about Berlin," said the Bran-

denburger, 'that friends there are like snow, which it takes a very little heat to melt it away.' "

"Well, just whilst this was going on, in came the knights again, sent, as they said, by the Mark-graf; we heard however, afterwards, they only came from his lieutenant. Buffo Voss, the tall knight with the hooked nose, took the word; and when speaking, he more than half turned his back on me. My enemies saw what was meant by that, and they were well pleased. This Buffo had no liking for the people, but to hear him, you would have thought that nothing was of half so much importance to him as to see them freed from the patricians, who, said he, were only their equals, self-elevated over the citizens' heads. That was the only reason why the Prince had come to the gates; but his good intentions had been frustrated by slyness and deceit. All that he wanted when he demanded the Mills, was, that the commonalty should be well served. It was that he might have an eye constantly to their interests, that he wished to build himself a house in their town; yet I, their burgomaster, had treated his messengers contemptuously, and even threatened them with violence. But I was well known at the court, and they knew whom I spoke for, and that I was not the willingly accepted head of the towns, and they had therefore interposed between the Mark-graf and the towns; for why should he be angry with all for the fault of one? But it was now full time for them to determine which they would obey, the Prince or the burgomaster. The Prince wished them well; what

the burgomaster wished, it was not for him to pretend to know; and as to what was in the Prince's power, that, too, he knew very well; he could come with force of arms, and shoot them down with his thunder of artillery; he could tear down their walls, and take from them their privileges, their rights of staple, and of bond, their coinage, and their exemption from duties. But whether or not the the Herr von Rathenow was the man able to protect them against the anger of the mighty, they all knew better than he did. The question, then, was, whether they were ready to go through the fire for the sake of their burgomaster, and to risk their all for him, or whether they were willing simply to sell the Mark-graf a strip of ground for him to build a house on. And with that he struck his fist on the table, and said, that the money that the Prince paid for the land should not, he should take care, go into the purses of the patricians; no, it was to go into the pockets of the citizens!"

"But I must inform you," put in the Brandenburger, "his highness did not approve of what the Ritters said on that occasion."

"What does that avail us? Can he recall the breaking loose of the storm? Can he replant the trees which it tore up by the roots? Though princes may blame the ill-directed zeal of their servants, yet they willingly receive what accrues to them from their work—do they ever restore it?"

"It is not well to judge harshly of people," murmured Herr Pernewitz; "good people are very scarce."

“ But they are the corner-stones and the pillars against which the attack is levelled, when the stronghold is to be pulled down ; the other stones will fall then of themselves ; and fallen they are ; the walls are breached and indefensible ; it wants but the pressure of the hand, and down they fall. God’s will be done, Herr Pernewitz ! I have suffered much ! Praised be his name, that I, poor weak old man as I am, have been able to endure it all ! ”

Herr Pernewitz bethought him of the weariness of his guest, and saw how the recollections of the past were giving him pain. He made, therefore, no further inquiries, though he might well be anxious to hear from his guest’s own mouth what he and others knew only from vague report. He rose up, and laying his hand on his friend’s shoulder, he said, “ You have need of repose.” Johannes answered only with a sigh, and rising up, followed him to the chamber in which the good Cordula had prepared him a bed, covered with her finest linen. A fire, too, was crackling in the stove, lighted by her own hands ; whilst on the table stood a jug and glass to drink out of, and a silver washing-basin ; a carpet, too, was spread on the floor, that the old man’s feet might not be chilled by treading on the boards. The wanderer had certainly not had for a long time such comfortable sleeping quarters. An expressive look was his only thanks to her, and she departed at the nod of her husband ; and as he, too, was about to retire, he said, “ Betake yourself to rest, dear

Johannes, under my roof; to-morrow will be another day, and then we can talk over all that has brought you to us, and of what we can do to help you."

His guest sat on the bed, and offered his hand once more to his good friend: "Accept my thanks, dear Pernewitz! Oh, I have still much to tell you! It is so long since I have seen the face of a friend! You bring to my mind the man who took me by the arm, and dragged me away across the Long Bridge, when the stones were whistling about my head. Oh, the fearful cry!—as if I was a traitor!—I, who loved my towns so truly! He threw a fisherman's shirt over me, and then——"

"To-morrow, to-morrow! Go now to rest!"

"But should we not willingly call to mind services which have been done us, and particularly before going to rest?"

"He was quite a common man, I heard, who got you out of the town in his boat."

"He was. None of the patricians knew me then, their doors were shut to me—yet the rabble outside did still worse. Was it not sad folly, Herr Pernewitz, that whilst the gentry on one side accused me for risking the Prince's displeasure and denying him in respect of his palace, the people on the other cried 'Stone him! tear him in pieces!—he has sold us to the Mark-graf.' Oh, I shouted to them denying it; but they would not listen."

"That is always the way in Berlin."

"Is it not so in other places?" asked Johannes,

pensively. "To accuse an honest man just for the exact opposite of what he does!"

"The many are ever blind and deaf; but those are to be judged who, whilst they both see and hear, yet walk perversely. But now you must go to bed."

"Many were sorry when all was over," continued Herr Johannes, and he spoke as if to himself. "Some of them sent to me at Teupitz, where I was, and wished to mediate in the matter for me. That made me angry—the Schumms, too!"

"That surprised every one—that Bartholomew should desert you in your difficulties. You had been reconciled to him again."

"A rich man, such as he, would have you ever upon his threshold. He sent me word straight out, that he would settle the matter for me, only I was to empower him to act in it just as he thought best. He and his clerks! I was, he said, imprudent and short-tempered, and did not know how to conduct my own affairs. My answer was, that—but it is no matter now."

"You *had* one friend in the towns."

"Tydecke von Achen was dead!"

"I mean another one, one who preceded you—God knows whether into the grave or not! But he went into exile previous to the time when you did. And it was you who sent him," added Niclas, in a low tone.

Johannes Rathenow looked up—he had but half understood him.

“A friend as true as gold—bold and ready! Had you not sent Henning Mollner into exile, he would never have suffered that you should go.”

“Henning Mollner, they cried, opened the gates at my orders! Oh, the wicked men!”

“And the next thing they said was, you had sent him away lest he should betray you—he was your scape-goat. Dear Johannes, you did ill—your best friend gone, and the worst calumny left behind.”

“But he went of his own accord.”

“It was whispered not—he went on your Elizabeth’s account, on account of the hard words you gave him. He was not himself, poor boy! It was rage, love, despair: and in his madness he broke the gates. A father might have forgiven him that; the citizens would have looked over it, and the Prince would not have punished him. Oh, Johannes, if ever there was a man who was good for anything in old Berlin, who knew how to manage the people, that man was Henning Mollner. A noble of the land might have coveted such a son-in-law—yet you refused him your daughter Elizabeth, and let him go into exile.

The old man covered his face with both hands, and sobbing, “My Elizabeth!” A long dried-up fountain in his breast seemed again to burst forth, and tear-drops once more moistened his eyes. He made signs to his friend to leave him, and then he buried his head in the pillow.

On the senator’s descending, he found his wife sitting by the stove, and her eyes were swollen.

“ Oh, Niclas,” she said, “ it grieves us to see bad men suffering ; but when one such as he is has to become a wanderer ! oh, it makes one fear one knows not what. They could not exile us, could they, Niclas ? ”

“ That is as God wills it, Cordula. But this I know, that did we go into exile, we should take with us what is of the most worth of all.”

“ But if they took our all from us first ? ”

“ Can they take our lightness of heart ? Trust me, dear Cordula, even exile were supportable had we but that. Poor Herr Rathenow took but one prop with him, his righteousness—his pride is his only staff. Such a one will neither feed him nor give him warmth ; it will scarce stay his steps when he leans on it.”

“ He will not be long amongst us—he is not what he was.”

“ Hum, hum,” responded Niclas ; “ he may be something again yet.”

CHAPTER III.

THE night which closed upon Old Brandenburg was not so quiet as might have been expected after a day so busy ; for only with the darkness had the work ceased, and work caused fatigue then, just as it does now. Still, after midnight, not a single hour passed over in which some horseman or other did not draw rein at the gates, and blow the horn ; and the gates had to be opened, and there was a riding through the streets, and a knocking at the doors of different senators—not even the clergy were left undisturbed, nor yet the Prince's officers ; and late as it was, and contrary to custom, they met together, shaking their heads, as if there was something amiss. Niclas Pernewitz was one who was called up, and he looked grave when he heard the news. Some of his friends came to his house ; and he went with them, first to meet others of the senators, and then to the Bishop's court. Few of them laid their head on their pillows again that night. I am not

able to state what one or the other of them said ; but the leading persons amongst them seemed undecided, and the more prudent of them thought it would be better to wait till the morning broke, and see if any more news came. A prudent suggestion it was in those times, just as it might be in ours.

Herr Pernewitz called upon different contractors and work-people of his, and he ordered the slater Bertold not to send off the slates which were to have gone the next morning to Berlin. The slater only made the remark, "That he could have guessed as much, but that the next day would be followed by another." Frau Cordula was all anxiety lest the noise should have awoken their guest, to which Niclas remarked, "Who knows but that the old Hans Rathenow will be awake within him. Everything has two sides, but neither of the two would be the worst as far as concerns him." But they took all care that the house should be kept quiet, that the good old man might have a chance of sleeping. The sun, however, which arose brightly, had no doubt awakened him, for before they expected it, they heard his footstep ; and it was no longer the tread of a beggar or an outlaw, with which he had stolen to their house—no, he trod firmly, as if he were once more burgomaster, and just as they were talking of sending him his breakfast, or going to invite him to come down, he surprised them by entering the chamber, greeting them cordially, and shaking their hands. His gait was upright, and he looked more noble now that he no longer wore his mantle. Though his doublet

was much worn, yet one might perceive that it was not the dress of a common man ; indeed, the day before he had not made his way on foot from Saarmund, but ridden in a peasant's cart. He had been obliged, however, to creep into the town on foot, for he was uncertain how it might have gone with the ban of outlawry which the towns had issued against him.

And they sat down comfortably to breakfast ; and the good Cordula, whilst placing her greatest dainties before him, talked far otherwise than she would have liked to have done. But how could a good hostess proclaim her anxiety to know why her guest was come, and what he was going to do ; especially, when he came to them so helpless and in necessity ? And how could a guest, such as he was, be expected to bubble out all his circumstances just as a barrel of beer bubbles out when shaken. No ; they sat down, and talked about unimportant matters, though their eyes might well have spoken otherwise. When the meal was over, and Cordula had left them, Niclas lifted a goblet to his mouth, and said—

“ I drink this to you, my dear friend, Johannes Rathenow, and that the Lord may guide all your steps, especially those which you are now about to take.”

“ Amen ! ” was the response of Herr Johannes, and he lifted the glass to his lips. He did not drain it ; indeed, he put it down half unemptied, and turned his back, lest the tear which was standing in his eye should be seen.

"And now, will you pardon me," began his host, "if I ask you what you are about to do? It is not from idle curiosity that I ask, but rather because your welfare lies next my heart; and I, who have not been away out of the country as you have, am more likely than you to know all the difficulties which lie in your way. If it please you, I am at your service to go with you either way, wherever your foot may tend."

"It is my intention to find my way to Spandow alone," answered the guest.

"To Spandow then!" Herr Niclas gave peculiar emphasis to the word Spandow, and threw a meaning glance at his guest: "As a friend, and in confidence betwixt yourself and me, it is the surest way for you. I have learnt to know them,—the Berlin and Koeln people, I mean. There is no dependence to be laid on them; and, besides, we are old, and have need of repose. So God be with you on your way to Spandow. I will send two messengers before you, and will attend you myself; and what will you wager that the gates are not thrown open for you, and you received with open arms."

Herr Johannes looked at the other surprised: "Allow me to go alone. I will knock at the gates in the evening, and enter without being seen."

"It might be wise, but the precaution is unnecessary. Why should you have any consideration for the two towns? But of this anon. I give you my word you have no need to listen at the key-hole, or pay attention to the manner of the

servants. There is a some one there who feels sympathy for you, and who is unchanged by time."

"God grant that it be so!" said Johannes.

"Yes, indeed, I can tell you, they are better to you there than you think; right glad will they be to open the gates for you, for you are the man they want."

"God forbid that it be so! But speak; what is it you mean?"

Herr Pernewitz did not perceive the emotion which his words had caused; his eyes were on the ground, and he was collecting himself to bring out what he had to communicate.

"You stand badly in Berlin, because you stand betwixt two parties. It is your wish to hold with one party, without sacrificing the other. Now, that will never do. The townspeople looked on you as a steward appointed by the Prince; the Mark-graf's people—I do not say the Prince himself—looked sharply after you, and could put no trust in you, because you were a citizen, and did not know how to act the courtier. It just fell out as it was sure to do, you missed your way with both. Having sworn an oath to the Prince, you could do nothing to his prejudice; and as a citizen, you would give way to nothing which could be prejudicial to the towns. Both parties, therefore, were jealous of you. It was the same with your senate-house on the Long Bridge—it was between the two towns, and with neither—only it was your misfortune that you pulled them both upon you at once."

“What is it you mean, Herr Pernewitz?”

“I will tell you directly. You fell out with senate and citizen, because you gave up the mills. It mattered not what you said, you were the doer of it. But you did more, which they could not forgive; and still, with no solid ground for your feet, and no strong wall before you, your Berlin heart beat high in your breast, when the Prince began to ask more than you could conscientiously yield to him. So it seemed to you at least, and I have nothing to say against it. But your resistance to the Mark-graf was ill-timed. What front could you make against him? No stronghold, no ready hands, senate and citizen both lying in wait for you, anxious that you might fall. It was not the building of the castle, it was the opportunity for finding fault with you; and that they availed themselves of. Had the Mark-graf asked for a kennel for his dogs, it would have been the same thing. If you had refused it, they would have shouted: ‘He wants us to quarrel with the Mark-graf,’ and again the Prince would have reckoned it against you as well; but you must now be aware, that the burgomasters since your time have given the Prince far more trouble than ever you did. You should have heard his complaints in the Diet, that Berlin and Koeln were just the stones of offence in his whole kingdom. Many a grey hair has he, owing to his trouble in managing them. Mathis Blankenfelde, who was chosen after you, played betwixt the two parties, and at the same time bore himself haughtily, and drained the towns’ coffers;

so that it was a perfect scandal. When his goings on came before the authorities, and all his double-dealing was known, he was compelled to resign, with shame and disgrace. Never was there a man so despised; and yet, who would think it, he has his party still, and plays the people's friend, pretending that he was superseded because he defended the town's rights against its lord. That is just like the Berlin people. Peter Brakow was the next, and everybody thought it would be right then, particularly when he married Eva Schumm, and had that family with him. The Brakows are about the richest now in Berlin, and Peter is no bad man, and not evil-disposed towards you, Johannes: but, good heavens! he was unfit for the place! In quiet times, he would probably have made a good magistrate; but the Rykes were against him, and the Blankenfeldes are opposed to whoever is in power, particularly if he be an upright man. You may believe me, the Prince, notwithstanding that he has had the power to nominate since forty-two, was very glad to let the towns agree amongst themselves, and let them have their own choice; and so it was that Balzer Boytin has got to the top. But he is perfectly wild, and—— But of this hereafter. You may see, as things are, you cannot do better than go to Spandow."

"Herr Pernewitz, I cannot understand you."

"The Mark-graf had never anything personally against you; he has proved that often; no one has done better for him than you did. He still remembers you, and he inquired lately, 'Wherever

is Herr Rathenow hiding himself? He was a stubborn man, but an honest one.' Well, do you understand me now? He will receive you at Spandow with open arms."

Herr Johannes looked surprised, but there was an air of melancholy in his face: "It is not for that that I go to Spandow; I do but go to see my Elizabeth, who has found an asylum in a nunnery since the death of her aunt Heidecke."

Herr Pernewitz nodded approvingly: "And good and praiseworthy it was of you that your daughter went there, only as to a place of refuge, and not to take the veil as the report went. She is too good to be a nun. But still you may do the one and not miss doing the other. Come, I am a man of my word; it is already time, Herr Johannes. Two horses are standing saddled, and my nephew shall start in advance to announce your coming to the Mark-graf."

"Oh, no, no; what have I to do with the Mark-graf? our roads lie different. I can believe that he has nothing against me personally; but he ratified the ban which the towns issued against me. I am an exile, and my goods confiscated. Perhaps he may wink at a father wishing to see his only child once more before he dies. I will not go before him as a beggar!"

"You have no need to do that."

"Then do not send your nephew."

"I will send him though," said Pernewitz, with a mistrustful and sidelong look at his guest. "It is not now as it was. The Prince ratified the

ban because the necessity of making peace demanded it, and because you did not appear to the citation. That, too, was why the towns did it, though not one of them was against you. But the circumstances are different now. I am sending my nephew, and you, Herr Johannes von Rathenow, are about to appear before the Mark-graf, not as a beggar, but in noble garb, with plume and fur, and attendants behind you."

"I will not do it!"

"You shall and must, as you are a good man and true! I pledge my word, Johannes, he will hold you out his hand, and say—'All is forgiven and forgotten; why did you not come sooner?' He will bid his chancellor tear the outlawry, and lead you again with song and music to your senate-house in Berlin."

"Now, may God forbid it!"

"You love your town, and refuse it!"

"It is because I love it well, and its liberties. Strange words they are that you have uttered, Herr Pernewitz. Permit me now to take my leave."

"Stay, stay, worthy friend; you must, indeed, go to the Prince to offer him your help; and old as you are, you must again take the burthen on your shoulders, not for your own sake, but for the sake of Berlin and Koeln; out of love to your towns, their rights and their liberties. You must, for if you do not, their privileges and their freedom will be taken from them by the Prince, who has stamped with his foot and sworn, good Johannes,

that a mediator, is, indeed, wanting, a free and guileless man, one who has courage to lift his voice and stand between the towns and the evil councillors of the Prince. Am I deceived? is it that you have not heard, that you do not know——”

“In the convent at Zinna, where the abbot entertained me a week hospitably, I heard of new outbreaks. Are they other than have been before? Are they other than are ever recurring? What have I to do with such? Am I to play the old game once more, to be once more the scape-goat? My few grey hairs!—I would die in peace, Herr Pernewitz. I am not wanted in Berlin. It may be that the Prince would fain have me; but Johannes Rathenow will not be his vassal; he will not be as a ball to be thrown into the towns that they may have something to play with!”

“Good heavens, Johannes!—you Mattheus’ son! The alarum bells are ringing in Berlin and Koeln; they have turned out the senate, which the Prince appointed, and have reinstated the old regime. Citizens, guilds, patricians, all together, are gone in procession to the Long Bridge, all in concord, with flags and drums, halberds and arquebusses; they have rent the treaty which severed them, and have renewed the old alliance. The old senate is once more in session on the Long Bridge; they have sworn to its defence with their lives. The colours of the towns again float over the roofs, and letters are gone to the other towns of the Mark league to send them troops to aid them in their

resistance ; and yet you, Johannes, would let your hands hang down !”

It was evident, from the listener's manner, that the news was, indeed, new to him. The wrinkles vanished from his forehead and the ashy paleness from his face ; his eyes sparkled anew, and his figure was drawn up.

“ Have they done that ?”

“ Yes, and more ; it was rumoured before, but last night the authenticated report came, both from Berlin and Koeln, and from Spandow. Our senate here has been written to by both ; it will require serious consideration.”

“ As to which of the two you will follow ?” said Herr Johannes.

“ And you, friend ?” The Brandenburger took his guest's hand, and watched his face anxiously.

“ Fare you well, Herr Niclas, and God be with your councils ! You will do your duty as senator of this your town.”

“ There is no hurry ; the decision will take some time. But you, Johannes ! God knows I think more at present about you ! They have done you dire injustice. Dear Johannes, it seems as if Providence had sent you just now to my threshold. I will despatch my nephew, and at noon you shall betake you to Spandow.”

Johannes Rathenow looked at him with a solemn air ; a minute passed before he spoke : “ Send your nephew, or do not send him, as you think proper ; but send him only on your account, and you yourself be responsible.”

"You have not determined yet. Well, it may be prudent and right, only time presses. To-day there may be yet time as regards the Prince; but to-morrow, who knows? and whether after to-morrow may not be too late?"

"United — unanimous!" murmured Herr Johannes; "Berlin and Koeln united! Tradesfolks and patricians! And the patricians agreed together as well! Who brought it about?"

"It certainly sounds like an eastern tale; but so it is, you may rely on it. They took the oath in Berlin, before the statue of Roland."

"And I not to be there!"

"The Mark-graf's last demand threw everything into confusion."

"What was it?"

"You have not even heard of that? That in reparation for the much mischief that they had allowed them towards his servants, and their vexatious conduct with regard to the building of his palace, they should betake them in all humility to Spandow, and render up into his hands all the privileges they had received from himself and former princes, that he might try them, and take from them what was not their desert, and grant them what he should consider their due."

"Holy Nicholas! the Prince required that?"

"To be sure he did, and who can blame him, considering the way they have been carrying on. He took away their freedom from duties in Oderberg some time ago, and his own officers of customs reside at present on the mill-dam. His judge,

too, Balthazar von Haken, he sent into the town, and there he has sat writing from morning to night; and the exchequer in the senate-house is fuller of papers than have been written in Berlin ever since it was a town."

"A Prince's procurator within the towns!"

"There he has been rooting about amongst the old traditions and archives, summoning this and that citizen before his bar, inquiring into their respective rights. The Berlin people spit out; and there has long been no bitterer reproach in the towns than to say of any one—'He has a Mark-grafish face!'"

"Is this really true, Herr Pernewitz?" and Johannes actually seized hold of him by the doublet.

"And less than the whole truth. He demanded of them the senate-house, and the right of judicature."

"The senate-house! All ye saints! *Then they are standing on their rights!*"

"Precious rights they are, says the Prince, and it is time they cease. And he has men at arms and artillery prepared in his castles."

Johannes Rathenow threw himself into his chair, and, resting on both his arms, he stared fixedly into the Brandenburger's face. There was nothing amiable in his look. After a pause, he asked—
"And the Brandenburgers, what will they answer the Mark-graf?"

"Nay; I cannot yet tell. It is a ticklish business; it has many sides, and wants much turning

over. For granted that the town league is still in existence, which some people denied in forty-two, whilst others said it was, then still the question is——”

“As to what the Prince will say to it? That he may be your enemy also should you take part with your friends. You said far different to that when you came to us yourself as a delegate from the Brandenburgers. Perhaps you have forgotten; I, however, remember.”

“I have not forgotten it. And I remember very well that you did not listen to me; I know, too, that had you done so, all would have happened otherwise. Had but the towns been agreed together and forgotten their wretched differences, the Berlin people would not have been crying for help to all the four quarters, this day; the towns had stood woven together like a forest of oak trees. Against such, no storm could have prevailed. But I know now that everything is changed; all is altered; the town league is a rusty chain now, whilst the Prince has grown into a man of might. He has no longer one to ask assistance, but rather to afford it.”

“Is, ‘the right’ then, no longer ‘the right?’”

“What is the ware worth which nobody will buy? How many a rich man prides himself on his rights, though knowing well that he has no longer power to enjoy them. The thought of them is his pleasure. But it is not for a poor man to gamble; he must do what he can to keep himself in simple bread. Our Mark of Brandenburg is a poor land.

We have no superfluity with which we can trifle ; we are forced to keep both ends together, and let none of our resources escape us. Good heavens ! with what bitter toil did our fathers clear our forests and drain our marshes ! Against what enemies had they to fight ? The Poles, the Pomeranians, the Lithuanians. How often were our fields laid waste, now by our enemies, and now by our own divisions ? Is our land so fruitful that it would yield again spontaneously, if the sword and torch of war should bring desolation upon it ? Good God ! how many times did they pray for a Saviour and peacemaker, when emperors and diets were making them a spoil ! So that at last our towns, when under the Bohemian princes, entered into league together, did it help us ? Have our highways been more safe ? It might have done for us what we required of it, but it did not."

" And now, therefore, ye would seek another master ?"

" We have no cause to seek him, he is there already. Good Johannes, go to Spandow. Oh, do not knit your brow—do not look so unkindly on me ! Oh, believe me, in my breast beats an honest citizen-like heart. Could we but do without him ! For what I have I would let it go ; but it must not be. What would be the result, even should every town with one accord send answer to Berlin, ' We come ;' and did they even come, and the victory be theirs, what would be the effect then ? Could we drive the Hohenzolleren out of the land ? Holy Virgin ! is there anything we could do which would

be worse or more foolish? To make our highways impassable, to be in a constant fever by night, to have to keep watch in our balconies to espy the coming enemy, to stand once more foot to foot against the nobility, to see a wolf's lair building again on every hill, in the midst of every morass."

"Go to your senate, Herr Pernewitz, and address them; you will be listened to there with joy. Your courts are thronged with loaded waggons, your boats are deeply laden—I have seen it well."

"Does not the word 'peace' bear a golden sound, Johannes? Yes, even to us. We who are the step-children of the empire, does it not become us of all others to cherish peace. The trades have scarcely raised their heads in our towns—our commerce has but just begun to find open ways for itself, and is everything to come to an end already? Do but consider what our prospect is. It would not be a quarrel between noble and town only, it would not be a mere scratching of the hide; it would be life and death: through many a long year there would be a flowing of blood. It would be a war to blaze up from the Elbe to the Oder, from the forests on the Spree to the land of Pomerania—a butchery the one of the other. Our flocks would be driven away, our highways would be laid waste, and our bridges pulled down; the thistle would grow in the place of the wheat-blade, and as empty as the highways would be of travellers and merchants, so full would the forest be of robbers and assassins. Civilization would again fly our land; barbarity and poverty would return

again. Or if we had it only amongst ourselves—but war is like a carrion, attracting to it birds of prey. Think you that the contest would be betwixt the Prince and the towns only? Will the Pomeranians, who are already in warlike attitude, will the Mecklenburgers look on quietly? Will not the Poles come over to have a hand in it? and they of Magdeburg, our old enemies, who watch every opportunity to molest us, they who are so rich whilst we are so poor? The Saxons, too—the Mark would suit them also very well. Yes, yes; helpers we should have enough—the one who gets the worst of it, will not he shout to his neighbours? But they will come at the call of either party, for there is gain for them from both; but the ones to lose all, and in every case, would be just ourselves; for as to the stability and riches of the towns, they are all over, in either case, should we hold with the Mark-graf or be his successful enemy. The strength which we have expended with the utmost caution is altogether gone, and neighbouring towns are inheriting our commerce.”

“ You speak eloquently, Herr Pernewitz, yet out yonder there are tongues more eloquent still.”

He alluded to the ringing of the hammers and the noise of the anvils issuing from the forges and whitesmiths’ booths. Herr Johannes was once more on his feet.

“ There must be trade and correspondence where there are towns,” said he; “ and the tradesman’s best friend is he who buys the most from him. The Mark-graf is a good customer to you people

of Brandenburg, though it is by giving you the privileges which he takes from us, and buying the nails of you with which he nails the coffin of our liberties. Ye are right busy forging and hammering," he continued, after a moment, during which the Brandenburger had been looking, half perplexedly, to the ground. "Niclas Pernewitz, is it just and right what you do?" And in saying this, he laid his hand on Niclas's shoulder. "You are building the fortress which will overhang and coerce Koeln. Is it the act of a friend?"

"As you said just now, dear sir, we are tradesfolk; he who buys the most is our best friend. It is so everywhere—you will find nothing but the same thing, go where you will. To be sure, the swelling of the veins on your forehead answer me that you want nothing to do with tradesfolk; you pride yourself still upon the freedom you enjoyed in your Saxon forests. But did your fathers take their freedom with them when they crossed the Elbe to seek in Selavonian lands what failed them in their free ground? You took what was offered to you, you bought for yourselves other lands and grounds under other masters. And did you consume each year the produce of your lands yourselves? Did you not carry it to other markets, and look on him as your friend who, year by year, took your surplus off your hands? Are we not all simply tradesmen, dependent upon those who take what we have too much of, giving us in return that of which we have too little? There is no one can stand alone, there is no rank dependent only

upon itself; one depends upon the other, and the closer we come together, the more it will be so. Every one of us lives by barter, and is a tradesman one way or another, whether he knows it or not. Freedom sounds well; but where was it when our fathers roofed their own huts in the forest, and had to kill and to cook their own meat, and grind their own corn? We require a miller and a carpenter; the worst amongst us stands in need of a hundred people to lodge him, and feed him, and clothe him. They grumble, and say, the Prince aims at our freedom. But is this Prince of ours a robber?—one who takes without paying in return? No; he is a great merchant, willing to take from us what profits us no longer, and give us for it that which will profit us. He gives us open roads, safe conduct, a justice which extends beyond the precincts of our towns, protection in other countries, a respectability as being his subjects. We had hard work to protect ourselves, even within our strong walls; but he is one who will build us walls unto the very borders of the whole land. Think over all this, Johannes. Should the towns maintain the upper hand, can they promise themselves this? Have we any such expectation? What is our whole Mark town-league against the wealthy Magdeburg alone? We call ourselves the offspring of the Hanse union; but how they look down upon us, our noble connexions in Lubeck, and Rostock, in Bremen, and Stralsund. Still we have our rights—yes, and such as none will buy of us. Who is the most prudent?—he who rids him of

his bargain whilst he yet can, or he who holds it till no one will bid him a red copper penny for it?"

"The bell has rung—you have to go to the senate, Herr Pernewitz."

"Johannes, you will go to Spandow."

"I cannot say—I am weary. What I have heard is too much news for once, and my perception is dulled."

"Oh, think well of it. I shall be back at noon, and we shall see each other again. But if you determine without Niclas Pernewitz's help, my horses are at your service at any moment."

He gazed anxiously and inquiringly into his face, and the hands of the two were clasped in each other.

"Should your way lie towards Berlin, the road through Saarmund is still open."

"To Berlin!" echoed his guest, not without surprise.

"To be sure, there would be more news for you to hear there."

"Would you send me into the hands of my enemies?"

"Foe to-day, friend to-morrow. The weathercock looks every way. Only you must not depend upon what it may be the day after."

"Go to your senate-house, friend. You will forget your address to the Mark-graf."

"I shall not forget it, Johannes, nor shall I forget that I am your friend. Betake you to Berlin, if your heart draws you thither, and you can forgive what they have done against you. Go

thither, they stand in much need of a man. They want a man; and who can say whether a Johannes Rathenow is not required there as much as in Spandow."

"Your counsel changes like a weathercock."

"My dear sir, in times like these, when each man's way lies far asunder, and none can say which is the right one, everybody must be left to go his own way, and no one presume to lead or guide him. But the first duty of a real friend is to tell his friend all that he knows of the matter. My duty is performed. The decision is for you. But one word more in confidence. There will be no general war, even though Berlin and Koeln should begin it. There will be plenty of talk backwards and forwards through the towns, and many a fair message sent to Berlin. But words are not spears and axes."

"The necessity is then the greater," said Herr Johannes to himself, when the Brandenburg senator had gone his way.

CHAPTER IV.

AT Spandow, in the Mark-graf's palace, there were many knightly personages met together; and they stood in groups, talking over matters such as we may conceive most likely to interest vassals, whilst in attendance on their liege lord.

Herr Johannes, the chancellor, was telling those about him, and, as he said, in confidence, of the new order which the Kurprince was about to institute.

"The order of the Swan it is to be called," put in Buffo Voss, "and the bearers of it they who wear the fetters of our fair ladies?"

"That is the report, Herr Voss," answered the chancellor, "though I hardly think that his highness would like it to be talked about so prematurely. But still, as we are amongst ourselves, I think I may say, that it is to be so."

"A pleasant name for it," said the Baron Bardeleben.

“And the insignia is to be equally so,” said the Ritter Hoym, “a representation of the blessed Virgin, with the infant Jesus.”

“Just so, Herr von Hoym. Sunbeams are to radiate from the head of the Virgin, and the world is to be represented as at her feet, and by its side there is to be a swan with outspread wings. Both the medals are to be attached to a silver chain, with protruding links, and where they touch each other, there is to be a cross.”

All agreed as to the design, and yet many of them looked at each other, as not discerning what was meant to be conveyed by it. The chancellor, therefore, was ready with his explanation:—

“The picture of the Virgin with the Child, is to call to the constant remembrance of the brothers of the order, that they should be thankful to God for his mercy, and for their hopes of salvation through the Lord Jesus. The swan is an emblem of our mortality. The chain, its jaggedness, and the crosses, are to represent the sufferings of man in this mortal life. I can tell you, in confidence, that an ingenious artificer is already on his way from Augsburg, to model it under the superintendence of his gracious highness.”

“And the order is to hold its chapters in the church of the Holy Virgin, in Old Brandenburg?” added Kurt von Alvensleben.

“So it is to be, to call to mind that the church on the hill is the oldest in the Mark, that many martyrs have shed their blood there, in times when pagan barbarity reigned around it. This order will,

therefore, remind its members of the virtues of moderation, and the necessity of avoiding ungentle dealings. It stands already, in the foundation writings, that the knights of the order shall ever implore the aid of the Virgin, and shall avoid approach to disorder and dishonour, that they shall be guarded also in word, and ever ready, on all occasions, to defend and save the honour of their fellows."

Again the hearers looked at one another with an air of uncertainty, and one of them asked, "Who will have the naming of the brothers?"

The chancellor made answer: "That will rest with his highness the prince, and his princely lady, and their choice will fall upon the noble families in the Mark, who have most distinguished themselves for their virtuous deeds."

"Then noble maidens also?"

"Maidens and matrons, of such as can count back four generations, and during that time have had no stain upon their escutcheons."

"A most excellent institution," said Buffo Voss, "and truly worthy of the wisdom of his grace. Are any knights yet named?"

"As I am informed, there are some already under proposition, of the families of Jagow, Kerkow, Arnim, Bodenteich, Burgsdorf, Puttlitz, Waldow, Schulenberg, and others."

"It will, indeed, be a worthy inducement to live virtuously," said the Ritter Voss.

The Graf Knipprode, who stood not far off, with his arms folded, and his head thrown back,

whilst a slight smile was playing upon his lips, remarked, "And it will not be very pleasant to such as love to lour on the highways, to wait for what God may send them. The Virgin Maria must, at least, undertake to engage knights enough, to ensure, in future, safe conduct."

The looks of more than one were cast to the ground by this remark. The Chancellor took the word in an impressive tone :

"And not that alone, Herr Graf. There will be a rigid inquiry as to the proceedings of the orderly and virtuous, and the princess has the names of such set down in her own apartments. Daily she inquires as to the bearing of this and the other one, and when she hears aught that is bad, she blots out the name, or good of any one, his name she puts on ; and so it will, indeed, act as a proper spur to the pursuit of virtue. Indeed, I am already aware that some, who covet the distinction, have forsaken drunkenness, which they carried to excess, and others, their habits of rapine on the highways. For one thing is certain, that his highness will choose his ministers from out this order, and look amongst them for his officers of state, and for such as may hold honourable employments."

A very general approbation of the institution was now expressed ; particularly, because only the pure noble families were to constitute it, and not people of the towns, who called themselves patricians, pretending to bear coats of arms, and call themselves nobility.

"No," said the Chancellor. "To be a wearer of

the order of the Swan, will be a sign to all times of unstained purity of life and nobility of blood. And, indeed, the towns have lately far from merited distinction or reward from the Prince. For they are like rebellious children, resisting their father's will, and there is arrogance in all they do. The Prince acknowledges the rather, by comparison, that his nobles, by shewing their fidelity to him, are worthy of distinction. He loves and honours the ancient houses of these lands, and it is his most heartfelt wish that, through sobriety and fair and noble dealing, they recover the name and character which once they enjoyed."

The hearers were silent, casting now and then ominous glances at each other. One of the Rockows murmured to Otto von Pfuel. "We want no more from him than that back which his father took of us."

"That would be to do the thing in a shorter way."

"And, by God! a better one," said Rockow.

In another window stood others of the older nobles, engaged in talking over all that the Prince had done for the Mark, and for the reputation and increase of his kingdom. They mentioned, to his credit, how he had agreed with the Mecklenburgers at Wittstock; how he had drawn over the county of Wernigerode into his possession; and how he had regained, by purchase, the lands of Kottbus and Neiderlausitz, lands which in former times belonged to the Mark; and as they spoke, they pointed to two stranger guests who were stand-

ing in another part of the room. The one was Johann von Polenz, the other, Reinhard Herr von Kottbus, two heads of powerful families. It was but lately that they had appeared at court, but the treaties between them and the Prince had been peaceably agreed to. Indeed, Herr Reinhard had already bequeathed his lands to the Prince at his death, he being childless.

Count Reinhard addressed some of the nobility of the Mark, who expressed surprise on hearing this. "Noble Sirs," said he, "it is not good to be a little prince between two mighty ones; when they quarrel, the blows fall all upon him. The weak man must therefore put himself under the protection of the stronger; for what can he do himself, or how can he be at peace, when all around him is at war? My ancestors sided with the Bohemians, when Bohemia was a mighty kingdom; but now it is eaten up by civil strife, and, with a man like George von Podierbad at its head, who can say how long it will continue? Now, therefore, I side with your liege lord, for he is one to measure what power he has, and to know what is his will, and that is the highest praise that can be bestowed on a supreme ruler."

This gained general assent, and next they went on to talk of the re-purchase of the new Mark beyond the Oder. Some were of opinion that it might entail disputes upon the country, for no man liked to see his neighbour come over his boundary lines. Herr Johannes, the chancellor, who had now again joined them, took the word.

"It was not a thing for the Prince's friends to feel uneasy about," he said ; "for, just as the Prince knew how to claim, having right on his side, and power to maintain it, just so he was one who knew how to yield where he was not in a position to defend. If a house be crumbling together, though it be dear to us as the one in which we and our fathers had played as children, yet it were foolish to attempt to prop it up and keep it together, at more expense than the house itself were worth ; it would be better to build a new one. And thus our Prince will not attempt more than he can do well. To strive for more than our powers enable us to maintain, may shed a lustre upon our names ; but, in reality, would be of no real avail, either to ourselves or others ; it would be work thrown away."

This was also assented to, and one and all gave their testimony to Prince Frederick being the man to succeed in whatever he undertook, for there was no one like him, who so carefully measured his own strength, and knew how far it would carry him.

"To him, as well as to his father, have many splendid offers been made," continued the chancellor, "many which others have lost their already secured possessions in their attempt to obtain ; but not so our Prince. We all know that the crown of Poland was intended to be his, and that he was educated in Poland, as the future king, in all arts and sciences, and knightly exercises."

"And, as we are all astonished to hear," said an old nobleman, "he can patter Latin, to put to shame any cloister monk !"

“And other languages besides!” added another.

“And he can read old books, page after page, without sticking fast!” said a third.

“Who would believe it?” said a fourth; “particularly of a Prince!—one who has surely servants and councillors enough to read for him!”

“They think otherwise in Poland,” continued the chancellor. “Though they are brave to a fault, and captious to such a degree that they quarrel sometimes for less than nothing, yet there is more learning, and more cultivation of the fine arts among them, than in all the Mark; and they require of their kings, that they be fit to take the lead as well in scientific accomplishments as in knightly prowess. The Polish nobility would entertain no respect for a monarch who was not in advance of his nobility. It was necessary, therefore, for the Prince, who was looked upon as the heir-apparent to the throne, to so excel in deed and design, as to be a pattern for the Polish youth.”

“And it all came to nothing!” put in one of the hearers; “for the king’s daughter, who should have been his bride, died suddenly!”

“Whether it has been for nothing, Herr von Bardeleben, you cannot determine yet, nor can I.”

“One may understand plain Brandenburgish well enough without Latin books,” said the Baron Rockow.

“And yet it is his grace’s opinion, that the learning he has acquired from such books is not of less value to him than had been the crown of Poland.

He had a strong party in Poland; won for him by his virtuous conduct and serious temperament; and it was proposed to him by the mighty in the country, with their usual rash and sudden determination, that they should elect him king, and carry through the Diet, that the king must recognise him as his heir. But the answer of the Prince was, 'No; my claim is buried with my deceased bride, and God forbid that I should wear a crown unjustly. If tens of thousands bade me take it, I not believing in the justice of my cause, what would it avail me, and how could I possibly succeed?' And hither he returned, not angry with the dispensation of Providence, but content, on the contrary, with what had fallen to his lot; and also to learn here, as he had learned in Poland, to rule over the lands of his father. For, sirs, there are different systems of government, and what is good for one country may not be applicable to another."

"He has made terms with Mecklenburg," said Kurt von Alvensleben, "and it seems not likely that there will be any difference with Bohemia."

"They fight enough amongst themselves," said the Ritter Hoym.

"And they have not forgotten what they got before Bernow," said Bardeleben, smiling pleasantly.

"But," said Herr von Alvensleben, "there is an enemy before the gates, whom he will not send back with good words only."

The chancellor looked at the speaker depre-

catingly ; he thought he was about to speak of the towns, and the annoyances caused by Berlin and Koeln, and he was anxious that this matter should not appear as of importance.

“ Do not think so, good sir ; the Prince troubles himself little about little matters ; do not credit all that the simple people talk about war. It is a foolish business, this affair of the towns, with their Balzer Boytin. But who expected any sense to come from them ? It will all be arranged quietly, and the guilty will receive their full reward.”

Some of the standers-by shook their heads, others whispered together. Baron Alvensleben said—

“ What have the Berlin folk and their horse-dealer to do with the country ? But the Pomeranians are arming in secret, and it will surprise me if the fire-arms which the Prince is forging in Stendal are merely for his own pleasure. The armories in his castles are filling fast with battle-axes, halberds, battering gear, and all sorts of arms ; and, by St. George, it is full time that the nobility should begin to feel their bones again, and try what a good arm can do and a good horse. If we are to have no work in the country, then let him send us out of it. The country wants a general war, Sir Chancellor, say what you may against it. This parlour work is good for scribes and tailors—for gentry it is nought.”

A regular licking of the lips pervaded the assembly ; some of them shook themselves, as if already rattling their harnesses, though all were unarmed.

"The Pomeranians have an eye this way," said one of them.

"We have an eye their way," said Alvensleben, with a laugh. "Let the gentleman in Stettin yonder only go to his fathers."

The Ritter Hoym clucked with his tongue: "There would be something then for a good man to earn."

"The Pomeranians have become most unreasonably well off in these latter days," said another.

"We will help them to bear their load," said a third.

Alvensleben cried out: "I hope to God that they will not snatch it away again from our very lips, and that there may be no Wittstock over again. The Mecklenburgers have their laugh yet, how they served us up their sweet words, to be put off with succession in absence of an heir, when we claimed the fief."

"War with Pomerania never profited the Mark," said the chancellor. "Near neighbours should agree."

"The d—l!" said Ritter Hoym. "Then what becomes of border-castles and watch towers? Are the horses to burst in the stables, and the armour and harness to grow rusty?"

"Does his highness want all his nobles to creep into the towns," asked another, "as some have done already? Are we to enter our names in the corporation books? That would be a pretty business, if we should beat our good straight swords into ploughshares."

“Nor was iron ever made for such a purpose,” said another.

“ ‘Mark-graf go, Mark-graf stay,
Only not come across my way,’ ”

grumbled Hans Stechow, in a low voice.

“The whole world may go smash together for me, so there is to be no fighting,” cried Heine Schulenberg.

“Oh! but it is not his Highness’s intention,” interposed the venerable Bardeleben. “What would a land be without good Ritters, and what would good Ritters be without war?”

“Have you not had quarrels enough amongst yourselves?” asked Herr Johannes. “Is peace, then, no blessing?”

“That is just it!” answered Bardeleben, hastily. “Feud and petty quarrel we have had our fill of, and that is just why we have had no regular war, such as would make one stretch every limb, and get to know what each was worth. Peace is right good, but then there must come a war first. I know well enough what you fine gentlemen sitting round your green table think of us—that we are turbulent fellows—never still, and nowise polished compared to your knights of the empire. Is a Ritter to sit him down in peace? Then he is a Ritter no longer. We rust when there is nought for us to do. How can a man be healthy, who lies day and night on his bearskins? Our knighthood ranked high, and our land flourished, as long as we were busied with the Vandals and pagans; but the time has gone over, all the world are become

Christians, and have their dukes and princes recognised by the states and the Emperor. So we have no right to stir, and are shut in on every side. On the coast all round we have the Pomeranians, and the accursed Hanse towns; our road is barred on every side. If our fathers had stood up, we should have been now on the eastern seas; but as soon as ever we go and strike a blow, and offer to take what is our own,—ours by right both of God and man,—there marches against us, not the sword,—no, we could do with that,—but a decree, with a lot of seals and imperial bulls. Is that the weapon good Christians fight with?"

"All that is the Prince's concern, not ours," interposed the chancellor, anxious to turn the conversation.

"Not at all, reverend sir, it is rather the public weal's concern; for when our fathers came first into this pagan country out of Saxony, for the purpose of driving out the grace-forgotten inhabitants, and make the country German and good Christians, the Emperors set Mark-grafs over the acquired lands, and these lands were to extend as far as the sword could recover them and the dry land give footing; in short, as far as to the sea. The Mark-grafs were changed as seemed good to the Emperor; but we, the free Saxon nobles, are not changed,—uninterruptedly we have dwelt upon this soil, and the father's rights descend to child and child's child. It is, therefore, our concern, as it was then, and as much as it is the Mark-graf's,

to see that the lands which belong to us come to us, and a war just now would be good for us all."

The chancellor looked anxiously round the room, for he saw that few of the knights could conceal their delight at what Bardeleben had said. There were many strangers there, and Albert Glinde, the burgomaster of Stettin, was one of the guests bidden to the banquet, though he was not then in the room. These knights of the Mark had voices, too, to be heard through a solid wall. It was by no means their way to talk in whispers.

Buffo Voss said to the chancellor, with a smile: "If the Duke of Pomerania has spies here, they would be no worse for being deaf; but if he has sense, he will soon see that shouting like this is only to make believe, and that there is nothing in it."

And whilst the talk about the chances of war still continued, the Herr von Polenz took the Graf Knipprode aside, and sought information about many things, for he was a stranger to the court, as one might see by his dress and manners. His complexion was olive, his eyes were dark, and the hair which folded over his upper lip fell down on both sides over his chin. He was of Bohemian descent, from the times when Lusatia belonged to Bohemia. He had listened attentively to the conversation, and little satisfaction did he seem to derive from it.

"Tell me, sir," he asked, "are these of the Prince's privy council?"

“The Prince,” replied the count, “takes into his confidence only such as are deserving of enjoying it.”

“His fame is spread abroad throughout the lands of Germany,” answered Von Polenz, “and his wisdom is what is most bepraised. It seems, however, that they of his own country think otherwise.”

“A prophet, Herr von Polenz, may be, you know, without honour in his own country.”

“I made over my lands to him in fee,” continued the stranger, “in consideration of his being a valiant and a wise Prince, and one able to defend himself against his enemies. My poor land of Lusatia has need of peace, for there is no compact to be entered into with the militant parties in Bohemia, such as would give us mutual security. But, by my patron saint, to see those nobles yonder, and then again to hear how the towns find fault and complain, one would think that the Markgraf has his hands full enough, and nought to spare for the succour of allies.”

“These Mark nobles cannot be induced to cease talking, Herr von Polenz. The Pope himself tried in vain. But it is a matter of little importance: Prince Frederick knows them, and how to deal with them. They will go through a good deal, and persevere, that is the best of them; but they want a stranger to put them in train.”

Baron Polenz shook his head doubtingly: “God grant that the Prince be the man to do it. I hold him to be worthy, and will stand by him, as I have

pledged myself to do ; but it is a garden of weeds. More than one man's arm is needed, and what will it profit him ?”

“ Ask him that himself, and he will answer you learnedly ; yes, and in Latin, German, Polish, or Italian, just as you prefer.”

“ But what is this new Order of the Swan ?”

“ The nobility are to learn to pray.”

“ That is the priest's business, and not the Prince's.”

“ You are right, praying is but the outside shew. The meaning of it all is, that the knights of the order shall no longer roast their pork with the bristles on, nor swallow their porridge out of the dish, for you must confess that it would be called unmannerly in the empire for a knight to lift a whole dish at once to his mouth. These are the first evident intentions of the new order ; and as soon as this is gained, the next thing may be to try to get them to use spoons ; and, finally, he hopes to make such progress that a Ritter of the Mark will, in every instance, pull off his boots before he goes to bed ; and if he does that, the order will not have been instituted in vain.”

Baron Polenz was a grave man, not given to laugh ; and the smile which had scarcely began to curl about his lip died away, as he cast a look over his shoulder to where the others stood.

“ In my opinion, he should let them eat out of troughs if it pleased them to do so, could he but generate peaceable notions amongst them.”

“ Begin with the outside, the other will follow.”

“ They want war with Pomerania.”

“ It is a long way thither. Don't be afraid.”

“ But they breathe forth nothing but a desire for blows.”

“ A good bit in their mouths will turn these hoofed men which ever way the Prince chooses.”

“ Then why does he let them talk in this way?”

“ They are free men. Will one of the race of Hohenzoller deprive them of a right which God gave them?”

“ But at his own court! It must sound like a formal challenge to the Pomeranians.”

“ You must speak plainer to the Pomeranians than that.”

“ Well, pardon me, but I certainly cannot foresee how it is to end.”

“ The more the people talk, noble sir, the more undisturbedly can one think; and what Prince Frederick thinks he gives words to, just when it is needful that the others should know it, not a moment sooner. And for the rest, and I tell you in confidence, this Order of the Swan is a chain of silver to be sure, but not so costly as one of iron, to bind the nobles of the Mark together. Were the chain of iron, where is the man who could draw it tight; whilst this silver one will not be too heavy for his little finger. Just at present it is a new thing; give heed, it will soon shew itself. Let, in the first place, some ten or a dozen wear it, and there will soon be ten dozen stretching out their necks for it. There is even no occasion to cover the hook so very carefully, they will jump at

it; and what is the wager that there will not be a regular race for it, such as we have never seen before nor shall again."

"A silver chain is certainly cheaper than a gift of lands," said the Baron Polenz.

"And finally, sir, the Prince has good reasons for thus humouring the nobility."

Just then the conversation was interrupted by a blast of trumpets, the folding-doors were thrown open, and the guests betook them to the banquet-hall.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT a treat it was to see, not only the tables laid out, but how the guests helped themselves! They were in nowise bashful, though their highnesses the Prince and the Princess sat at the table, with many another noble lady and fair maiden. To be sure, just for the first minute, the gentles hardly knew what to do with their elbows; but this was only for a moment, for they then dragged the dishes towards them, and pulled and tore as if engaged in combat, pushing one another with their elbows as if they had no neighbours; nor did any of the ladies complain if a chicken-bone, which might fall upon her lap, was seized and devoured by her gallant neighbour; on the contrary, she would laugh, and transfer her half-picked bones from her plate to his for him to finish.

The gifts of God are ever fair to behold, and that which he has made is good; but to see how the Prince's cook, Herr Czeuschel, had garnished

the tables and the dishes, each good in itself, and the whole good together!—it was enough to allay the appetite by the very fulness of admiration. Nothing, however, is stationary, the fairest things tempt most the hand of the destroyer; and just as Troy fell under the sword and lance of the Greeks, so perished the fair arrangement of the tables under the fingers and knives of the hungry guests. Herr Ulrich Czeuschel looked on with actual grief; and he had reason. The arts are of many sorts—some artists build for ages to come, some for years or months, others but for the moment. The piper who played during the feast, did not his notes die away and go mingling with the wind? Had Herr Ulrich built his tower, and terraces, and arches, of stone and mortar, instead of meal, and eggs, and honey, they might have been standing to-day to the honour of the architect; but as it was, the fair garden, with its rocks and fountains, its magic castles and leafy bowers, under which sat shepherds and shepherdesses, all were gone—in less than half an hour it looked like a wilderness; and though one course followed another, yet the fair arrangement, as at first, could not be restored. But Herr Czeuschel, like a brave man who, when he sees unavoidable ruin impending, still exerts himself to guide in some measure its direction, so Herr Czeuschel now took up a turkey which stood there skewered, and in a few moments he carved it with a large knife in such a dexterous manner, that on the skewer being withdrawn, the whole bird fell into small pieces. There was almost a

shout raised by those who saw it, and the Markgraf and his lady both of them nodded applause to the kitchen-master.

Notwithstanding the warrant that ancient books give as to the fact of the old pagan god, Neptune, having had a fork, still it is a fact, that at the time of this story, people did not require forks to eat with. They were in use to make hay with, but the general opinion was, that the fingers were given to eat with; strange as it may appear, to see a gentle maiden carrying up meat to her mouth between her fingers, still such was the case. The fair Helen was, to be sure, a pagan; but when we learn that Queen Mary Stuart, a hundred and fifty years later than the period of our history, helped herself to her meat with her fingers, having no other assistants than her teeth, we need not be surprised at our Mark ladies doing the like. The Princess herself did so, with the exception that the cook cut the meat for her with his knife. The ladies' fingers did not appear in proper condition to handle satin or velvet; but still there was the tablecloth to wipe them on, and even an extra cloth to each for the same purpose. Some, however, did not see the necessity, and with considerable justice, too—why should they wipe their fingers, when they had to put them into the dish again directly.

The Franconian nobles sat aghast to see how their Mark brethren devoured their food; but when it came to drinking, there was not so much difference between them. The one who eat, perhaps, the least, was the Markgraf; but his eye was every-

where, and nothing escaped his notice. The appetite of his guests, rudely as some of them displayed it, seemed rather to afford him pleasure than the contrary; and he made no satirical remarks, as did some who were present. It might be that he had more weighty matters to employ his attention; one thing he paid attention to was, the character of the toasts that were drank. He himself drank first to the welfare of the Baron Polenz, and Baron Kottbus, who had that day joined him for the first time; afterwards to a Baron Waldow, who, like the two before mentioned, was in treaty with him about his fiefs and territory.

Johann von Polenz rose to reply, and after filling his goblet, quaffed it off to the health of his feudal Prince, the Baron Kottbus standing up with him. The end of what he said was nearly as follows:—That the fame of the Prince might shine forth pure as heretofore, and his kingdom extend itself; for a mighty Prince was like to a great tree in the field, beneath which the shepherds shelter themselves in time of storm and tempest. The time was come when the freeman could no longer defend himself alone against attack; that, therefore, the existence of such a ruler was a providential kindness to the people, for that under his banner the oppressed might range themselves, whilst civilization, and commerce, and manufactures began to flourish throughout his land. And next he related with how much willingness he had done homage to the Mark-graf and the line of Brandenburg; and the sincerest wish that he enter-

tained, and the one to which he emptied his glass, was, that Prince Frederick the Second, by God's grace, Mark-graf of Brandenburg, might spread his conquests, not by the sword or hostile array, but by means of his justice and his virtues, so that many might seek to follow in his train, and trust them to his guidance.

The few immediately in the neighbourhood of the Baron Polenz applauded his wish; but from the other tables there was no echo. The Prince, however, smiled approvingly, and returned thanks in a few telling sentences. "Would to God," he said, "that whilst strangers from afar are willing to recognise my poor endeavours, and hold my esteem as worthy obtaining, that my people in the Mark would as readily advance to meet their Prince, and give him the helping hand!—and as I have drank to you, noble gentlemen, so, my worthy vassals, do I now drink to the prosperity of my country and of my faithful people, and that they may ever be in readiness when I would strengthen my kingdom and set fast its ruler's power; for I call God to witness, it is my intention so to do, and I will have all to help me so to do—all who love their country and their Prince!"

The goblets now clinked pretty generally, and a buz of varied description arose from the guests.

"The sword shall not rust in our scabbards," continued the Prince; "for turn us whither we will, we meet with enemies, and the Mark-man must ever stand ready harnessed to defend his hardly-gotten country; and this I know of my

people of the Mark, that they are ever willing and gladsome to gird on their armour and meet the foe face to face, be his numbers what they may !”

A wild burst of applause interrupted the speaker ; goblets clinked, knife-handles hammered on the tables, and spurs jingled most musically together.

“ But,” he continued, “ let not the good sword be drawn recklessly from the scabbard ; let it not be a dangerous plaything in the hands of changeling fools ; be it rather a mighty weapon to be wielded by the strong arm of righteousness ; drawn let it be, and well laid on where the doors are closed against the entrance of the law. In such a place, good friends, will I and mine of the Mark appear, and should they not listen to the word of truth, but be deaf to the voice of reason, their gates shall be torn down ; I carry not the sword of justice in vain.”

Again the words pleased all, for each put his own interpretation on them ; and the conversation became now very general, as the wine began to shew its effect. One thing is true, that though a man be ever so great an eater, he must at last be sated ; but as for drinking, a man may give over when, perchance, it happens that the cask runs dry.

Good heavens ! the quantity that Dietrich Barfuss had eaten, and Tilly Kracht, too !—the princess had been watching them a long time, and had motioned her pages to press food upon them, assuring them that they had eaten nothing at all. Fritz Kroecher would willingly have matched them

had he had it in his power ; he made up his mind to drink up the difference, and would have been, ere this, under the table, had not decency restrained him a little. Again, too, he was rather discomposed by the presence of the strangers, particularly the Franconian nobles. His cousin, too, Buffo Voss, poked him at times in the ribs, for the strangers were evidently watching him.

The run of the discourse was about the deeds of arms, performed in olden times by the Mark-men. It was evident that the Prince took great delight in speaking of and eulogizing the noble knights who had done such good work in castle and field ; especially he named the olden prince who had ruled over the land so wisely, and carried the name of Brandenburg far, even into Italy. He told of Otto the Fourth, he of "the arrow," of his dauntless courage, and of his princess wife, who, when her husband was in fetters in Magdeburg, rested nor day nor night till he was once more free. How, too, the nobles of the Mark had encamped before the town, and done their all for the freedom of their Prince.

At this, Buffo Voss stood quickly up, and holding his glass above his head, he shouted—"To the memory of the Mark-graf Otto, and the nobles of the Mark, and that the time never return when currish townsfolk curtail the liberty of a prince !"

This sentiment, which pleased all beside, was far from grateful to the ear of the one to whom it was pointed, for the Prince, as he rose to answer, looked anxiously to where sat the burgomaster of

Stettin, Albert Glinde. "Honour and respect," said he, "to all good citizenship, and to every town which remains true to its rulers, and seeks not for more than is its due. But, thanks Buffo, for your pious wish; the Princes of these days will take good heed that no cage draws its wicker round them!"

And with that he turned him to Albert Glinde, and made inquiries as to the health of the Duke of Pomerania, to which the burgomaster answered fully, speaking well, as did the Prince, of the Duke. Yet if any one had had occasion to notice nearly, he might have fancied that what passed between them was, perhaps, intended mainly for others to hear.

"The Pomeranians are a noble people," said the Prince, "and our nearest allies, and God forbid that they, who from natural causes, and for the sake of both, should be as one with us, should, through treachery or false rumour, be made our enemies! As long as our noble cousin Duke Otto lives, be it ours to prevent discord!"

"But should the time come," began the burgomaster of Stettin, "that the Lord, in whose hands is the fate of all, should be pleased to call away his grace, my gracious and noble master, I, for one, hope that they of the Mark, and the Pomeranians, may be yet more united, and if God wills it, and the treaties of past time, that they be one people obedient to one ruler.

Albert Glinde lifted his goblet and clinked it against the glass which the chancellor held, but,

so it happened, the ring was inharmonious, and the chancellor's cup, which was of glass, cracked. The nobles started ; it seemed like an evil omen ; and the position in which things at present stood occurred to many. Few of them but knew that the burgomaster of Stettin had a leaning towards Brandenburg ; and, indeed, as every German had a full right to entertain his own opinions, so the words of Albert Glinde were no treason against his own master. It stood written, that should the line of Pomerania fail in male heir, it should fall to Brandenburg ; and it happened now that Otto of Pomerania had no children ; many, therefore, foresaw that Brandenburg and Pomerania were likely to become one, and many also wished it to be so ; others were against it, and were of opinion that the indirect line of Pomerania-Wolgast ought to be the rightful heirs, as the nearest relatives. Thus the matter stood, causing a good deal of quiet debate, for it was not seemly to quarrel about a prince's heritage in his lifetime. Albert Glinde, who wished well to Brandenburg, was not a little shocked when the glass cracked, for the omen was a bad one ; but being a prudent man, he allowed no time for others to have occasion to notice it, but continued his harangue.

He told first how it had ever been the policy of the Dukes of Pomerania to get men of German blood, nobles as well as peasants, to settle on their lands ; for, besides that they were more courtly in manner than the pagan tribes, who were riveted to their foul uncivilized habits, they were also

better tillers of the soil, getting at least three times more produce from the land than the original inhabitant.

“ But especially in the towns,” he went on to say, “ is the progress of German industry most visible. Wherever the Saxon or the Nertherlander is to be found, there also are trade and manufacture. They build stone houses, and surround their towns with walls and towers ; they institute unions amongst themselves, and the villages round them thrive through their ingoings and outgoings. In Stettin we have already made such progress, that the aborigines are well-nigh cleared away, having been driven back to the marshes beyond the Oder, where they still live in huts as did their fathers ; for, notwithstanding the better example constantly before their eyes, they will adopt nothing that the stranger brings them, but crouch in their mud, and gaze stupidly at him, hating both him and his improvements. The former princes well knew the advantage which the influx of men of German blood would bring to the land ; for where there is wealth and property, there will reason, and not passion, alone decide the day. But with all our hold in these lands, we are not altogether firm and secure ; for there is, as it were, an underground heaving, and a great hatred against us in the hearts of the former inhabitants, and fain would they rise against us and drive us forth ; for true it is, the two races cannot exist together, the one must be uppermost, and the other oppressed, and at last hunted forth. It is, therefore, the greatest

wish of the people of Pomerania, that should the direct line of their princes come to an end, the sceptre go into German hands. And thus we look anxiously towards the Mark, a land where the princes and nobles have cleansed the soil from the stain of savage life, and founded a government which is an honour to the German states of the Roman empire, and a tower of defence against our ancient enemies. Pray God that the tree of our German race be not blighted and withered, ere it have time to strike strong root; for surely it is so, that unless the German spirit entirely pervade all, the idleness of the savage will gradually exercise its blighting influence, and cause the onward course to be a moment stayed, where it should stay, no, not for a moment."

Though there were many round the board who could not boast pure German blood, yet no one said a word in contradiction of the speaker, or spoke for their pagan ancestors. They all wanted to appear German, notwithstanding the betrayal given to it by their names. It was enough to prove Albert Glinde's statement, that the German spirit had pervaded all, and overcome. But, to be sure, the greatest part of the hearers heard nothing that was said. It was too learned for them. They sat busy drinking.

The Mark-graf had heard all, and nodded affirmatively. He made, however, no reply, but turned the conversation to other matters:

"My brother, Duke Albrecht," said he, "has

written me strange things about a knight who, they say, is from the Mark: one who has distinguished himself so much in battle with the Turks, as to be the talk of every one. He carried a colour on the disastrous day at Varna, and my brother writes, that, had all held themselves on that day as he did, the believers had not had cause to mourn as they have. Two-and-thirty Turks were slain by his single hand, and King Louis himself, and another Christian leader, were cut out by him from the hands of the enemy. Indeed, when the King of Hungary fell, it was he who with his people fronted the unbelievers, and, dripping all over with blood as he was, and swinging his morge-star over his head, he was a sight to strike fear even into the hearts of the Christians. Hungary is full of his praise, for he saved many warriors in the flight. My brother mentions that for a whole week there was nothing talked of in Vienna but this Brandenburg knight, that the women stood, day by day, crowding before his hostelrie, to catch a single glance of him, and if he appeared, greeted him with the sweetest praise; that the ladies, matron and maiden, had sent him embroidered scarfs and pennons, and quarrelled amongst themselves, which of them could obtain a lock of his hair. Had he fulfilled all their requests, he must have come bald out of Vienna. He was presented to the Emperor in the citadel, and the Emperor himself knighted him, for it came out that he had not yet been dubbed, and hung a golden chain around his

neck with his own hands. My brother wishes me joy of having such a one in my kingdom, but does any one know who it can be?"

All had listened attentively, but there was not one who knew. Of all the friends of the parties present who had gone to the war, one had died in the plague, another was prisoner here, or there, or fallen in battle. They guessed and surmised in vain.

"My brother did not mention his name," said the Mark-graf, "but when he comes to us, as I hope he will, we will receive him well, and rejoice that we have such a one."

The conversation at the other end of the table seemed very interesting, and there was a good deal of whispering and laughing. The Prince repeated his question, whether the stranger knight was known to any of them. At first all were silent. At last Bardeleben answered:—

"We were talking about a knight, your highness, who makes people talk about him; but I hardly know whether it be good to talk about him here, or not."

"Is he of noble blood?" asked the Mark-graf.

They were again silent, only one named, in a low tone, the name of Koepkin Zarnekow.

The prince's face clouded over: "That name no good Mark-man should name, for he who bears it is no longer of the Mark, and still less should that name be spoken in the presence of your Prince."

The knights were again silent, but there was that

in their faces which excited the Mark-graf's curiosity, and he asked :

"What is he doing? The false villain is outlawed, and driven beyond the frontier."

"He is going on, yonder, worse than he did here," said Bardeleben.

"That is nothing to us," said the chancellor; "let the Saxons look to that."

The old knight shook his head: "What is the boundary betwixt Lusatia and Saxony? There is neither river nor mountain. They who live there know scarcely in which land they are born. How are we to keep the frontier from such as he?"

"It is God's pity," said the Baron Polenz. "These lands suffer much from the villain, and his assurance goes beyond all bounds. It is my earnest supplication to the prince, my new feudal lord, that a limit be set to the excesses which my poor Lusatians can scarcely cope against. In the last year, he burnt three villages."

"And then the inroad into Zossen, the other week," said Bardeleben. "He plundered four houses, and took away women and children, under the very eyes of the garrison, who were too few to sally out against him. The most they could do was to hinder the market house being burnt down."

"Yes, and in Wiltbritzen," said another—"who would believe such a thing—made the priest give him and his fellows dinner, and they making sport of the holy father's two female housekeepers. Yes,

and they made him fiddle to them, while Koepkin and his crew danced."

"It was because the priest had sent information to the people at Trebbin, by a peasant woman, that the band were in their neighbourhood," said another; "so he had to answer for it."

"And what business had he to meddle?" said another, in a low tone.

"The way he got out of that," continued the first, "was not like anybody else's doings. The Saarmund and Trebbin people came creeping up—one party from Beelitz, and the other from Luckenwald, and the village was surrounded. They thought they had him sure enough, for the fiddling and piping was going on at the parsonage, as if they were drinking and making merry, thinking themselves safe. Well, all at once, out burst the fire out of the house roofs, whilst from the inclosures there bolted horses, riders, oxen, and pigs—all like mad, all sorts of ways. To be sure the Saarmund and Trebbin folks blew their trumpets, and away in pursuit, and when they caught them, who had they got? They were the village folks themselves, tied wrongside first on the cattle, and on the horses, the children the same, and rigged out! They were ready for a Walpurgis night. The poor beasts had been singed to make them wild, and in the meantime Koepkin and his men got away. Not one man did he lose. He even stopped for awhile to laugh at them. There were the priest and his two housekeepers tied together, swinging out of the window over the holy crucifix. They

cried 'Fire!' and 'Murder!' till they were got down. My cousin was there, and saw it," said the narrator; "and he said it was the merriest sight he ever saw."

This account was very differently received by the audience. The brow of the prince grew more and more cloudy as the story went on; and it was evident that the narration of such an affair was very unpleasant to him, just at the time when he would willingly have had his guests' thoughts turned towards more noble examples; but it was still plain enough that these latter thought it a very good joke. Koepkin had, without doubt, a strong party, and was a man of no small renown. He had sent denunciatory letters far and wide over the country, and, indeed, had declared feud with ten different towns, and, whenever he could, he seized the citizens. Seize him they could not, for he had hiding-places everywhere. He took care not to give annoyance to any of the nobility, so these latter took no care about him, except when called to act, by their duty to their liege lord.

"There is no robber, since the Devil of Soltwedel, who has had so strong a band," said Fritz Kröcher.

"The Stellmeisers, what there are left of them, have joined him," said another.

"Every vagabond goes to him," said a third. "He can muster five hundred men at a pinch."

"Is it indeed so?" said the prince. "The man whom we exiled is become, then, a field captain, and one to take the field against, with man and

horse, instead of sending for him by the beadle, and consigning him to the gallows."

The Baron Polenz made offer of his men, on condition that the prince would summon the nobles in the castles on the frontiers; for it would not be easy to catch Koepkin, without the connivance of some of them whom he would not name.

Buffo Voss said, "It would not be conceivable how he could carry on, if it were not for the help which people whisper he has, for Koepkin has not got it in him."

"He was always a blockhead," put in another.

"He can strike," said a third; "but as for seeing round a corner!—set a net for him, he was sure to fall into it."

"Then his friends manage for him?" asked Baron Polenz.

"Not friends," said Kurt Alvensleben. "He has a woman with him, who, they say, is wonderfully beautiful. Some say she is an unbelieving Moor, out of Spain. She deals in magic; and that is why he has the greatest spite against the priests, and breaks the churches, and does many things, shameful for a Christian knight to do. They say he does it unwillingly himself, but the woman forces him."

"Well, well," interrupted Bardelebent, "that is all true enough about the churches, and the priests, and the beautiful lady. Indeed she rides with him on a black horse. But she is not the only one. He has a gipsy witch with him. It is she who does it. She gets him his men, and keeps them together. She knows beforehand what one is going to

do. If any only meditate treason, she has them hung up on the next tree. That is why he is feared. The witch has given him a drink, so that he always escapes, and can be invisible if there is need; and it is more like as if he were hers than she his. That is how he is cleverer now than he was by nature. I am not going to say anything for Koepkin, for he was always a brutish fellow; but, after all, the bad that is in him is not all his own. He would not break into churches of his own good will; and a sad cause of grief it should be to all good Christians, to see a Christian knight so in the clutches of the enemy."

The Princess crossed herself devoutly, but the Prince bit his lips.

"I suppose, then, we should send a priest to exorcise him, and then we should make a good and noble knight of him again."

"It is sorrowful what we have to live to see," said Buffo Voss; "but after what I hear there are many things clear to me. When your Highness so graciously gave a lenient sentence to my unhappy cousin, Wedigo Lüderitz, it was not found out who it was who was with him, for had he been by himself he would never have done what he did. Since then I have discovered that Koepkin Zarnekow was seen with him only the day before. Who can say how such a man could persuade him, or under what shape he appeared to him?"

There was evidently more pity—nay, even actual sympathy entertained for Koepkin Zarnekow, than proper feeling of disgust and horror at his enor-

mities ; and the Kurprince gave a turn more than once to the conversation, which, however, seemed always to come back to the same disagreeable subject. Just now, however, one of the pages announced that a senator of Brandenburg, Herr Niclas Pernewitz, asked an audience of his Grace.

The company rose, and the trumpets sounded. The Prince conducted his lady to her chair of honour, and then retired with some of his councillors. The courtiers—and there were some who could boast a courtly air—gathered round the Princess, and merry laughter shewed the nature of the conversation.

Meanwhile, there were others who were not well satisfied. Eike von Holzendorf took the chancellor on one side ; “How is it,” said he, “that the Mark-graf has not said a word about the towns ? We thought we were bidden on that account.”

“Perhaps it was on that account.”

“But if any one of us turned the talk that way we were interrupted. And in God’s truth, it is not only a simple quarrel about this Balzer Boytin—the thing looks very bad indeed.”

The chancellor drew the baron still further from the company : “There is a way of looking unconcerned though the appearance of things be ever so bad.”

“And, by Heaven ! it is absolute rebellion.”

“Against the Burgomaster Balzer Boytin, Baron Eike ?”

"No, no; they have pulled down the Margrave's banner."

"Quiet, quiet!" interrupted the chancellor; "if it pleases the Prince to consider the people of Berlin at issue with their burgomaster, and not with himself, it is for a true vassal not to think otherwise than as his liege lord thinks."

"But when it is done before his face?"

"Oh, the time will come when it will be accounted for; but when the time is not come the convenience also may be wanting."

The door opened, and the Mark-graf re-entered the room. Niclas Pernewitz was in attendance. There were traces of anxiety on the Prince's forehead; but they disappeared as he approached his noble lady and presented the senator to her.

"See here," said he, "a good citizen and a friend of his Prince—one who is ready to think and act, and is ever on the spot beforehand where danger threatens."

The senator bowed low before the Princess, and she gave him her hand to kiss.

"Danger!" echoed the Princess; "I hope you bring no news of danger. You are a man of peace."

"That he is indeed," said the Kurprince; "and would that the authorities in every town were men of peace likewise! It would be better for my country and better for my towns. Is it not so?—are you in Brandenburg worse off for being peaceable and willing to render to your Prince what is

his right? And you, Herr Albert Glinde, speak you for Stettin; is it not well to keep faith with your princes?"

"We keep faith, as good subjects should," answered the burgomaster; "but the citizens are yet jealous of their rights."

"And right it is that they are so," interrupted the Prince, turning to Niclas Pernewitz. "Our good friend here from Brandenburg brings us strange news concerning Berlin. It is fortunate, however, that we have not heard them only now for the first time, and that they are not of a nature to turn our hair grey."

"Are they again in rebellion?" asked the Princess, for she knew well what the Prince's manner denoted.

"When were they ever loyal?" asked the Prince.

Otto Pfuel began a narration, but the Mark-graf interrupted him: "We know all—all, good sirs; and much are we displeased. We meant well to the two towns, and it was our intention to build a house within their walls; but, by God, if they change not in their ways, they will hinder us from shewing them such favour!"

Two or three of the nobles answered: "By Heaven, they have done ten times more than enough already to hinder that!"

"It is for us to judge, fair sirs, how far they have merited our displeasure; or whether, on their returning to their duty, we may accept their excuses, and receive them again into favour."

“Into favour!” half-shouted Tilly Kracht, on whom the wine had taken effect; “they have made sport of——”

“Of whom?” burst from the Mark-graf; and he held himself proudly up, and his eye glanced royally over his nobility. “I hope and trust that not one of my people thinks that there is one in the Mark who has made sport of the authority of his lord! You, Tilly Kracht, and you others, I hope and trust that there is not one who thinks it. I am not the one with whom sport is to be made!”

And as he trod the room, his glance fell upon each of his Ritters. It was a look which they might well quail before. No one spoke—indeed, the countenance of each was turned to the ground. The Prince sat down on his state-chair. After a while, he addressed himself to Albert Glinde, who was standing before him, and to the Barons Polenz and Kottbus.

“Stiff-necked people in my towns! There is more of madness than of wisdom in what they do. They are industrious and creative, but the rich food they eat, stuffs them up; their riches are grown over their heads. I honour the honest citizen, and more of them are honest than otherwise. It is so everywhere; but the bad amongst them are up and doing, the good are passive and tranquil; and thus there is universal disquiet, contention, and rebellion. But what one man can see behind all this? It is God alone, not the Prince, who is able to do it. Wicked tongues tell them we wish them evil—we would take to ourselves what is theirs—we would

tear down their walls, and turn their freedom into slavery. Such wicked tongues it is for me to punish; the good have nothing to fear from me. But truly the affair, good sirs, is of little moment to me; they rebel against their authorities. When was there a burgomaster in Berlin with whose government they were content? I accorded to their wishes; I came at their bidding; I nominated a new senate, and put everything on a proper footing. I thought, Now it is done—their wish is fulfilled; the rule of the patrician was at an end. Scarcely had I turned my back, when the thing began again; not one of them was satisfied. The best men they had they drove forth. Can I help a man who will not help himself? This Balzer Boytin!—it was at their wish that he was appointed, and now they will have nought to do with him. Well, am I to entreat them?—am I to lay my commands on them? What concern is it of mine?”

The Ritter Bardeleben took the word: “Your highness, they have stormed his house; they have driven him from the town, after having——”

“Let my chancellor be informed of what happened more. Is Berlin my country? Holy Powers! I am also a Prince of the Empire! Are my ears to be deafened day by day with their petty quarrellings? It might seem as if they would that I should hear of nothing but them, that my eyes should rest on none besides. It is far otherwise; this Balzer Boytin writes that he will appear before my council. If he is wronged, we will write in his behalf to

Berlin and Koeln; if he is in the wrong, what is the man to me? Shall I forget everything for his sake—my country, my court, man, woman, and child—all for the sake of an exiled Berlin burgo-master? I have to meet the enemies which threaten the land; I have to purge out robbers and recreant knights; I have to uphold my princely right against those who would seek to meddle in it. Let the towns fight out amongst themselves their petty quarrels, their little disagreements about the colour of a hair!"

And the Prince stood up, and signified that the audience was at an end; and all took their leave, some shaking their heads, and understanding nothing of what the Prince meant; none of them had ever seen him so excited and angry before, for his colour had changed more than once, and it was easy to divine that he had kept back much that he would have said, and spoken otherwise than was his real opinion.

The chancellor and Count Knipprode were the only persons who remained with the princely pair.

"Good Heaven! what is the matter?" said the Princess, springing up, and laying her hand on his shoulder, her eyes meanwhile looking into his, as if to pierce his secrets.

"It is too bad!"

"What is there that is so bad that you hide it from your wife?"

"It is too bad, by God!—and to be compelled to be silent—to be obliged to suffer it!"

"Frederick, my good lord, they call you 'the

Iron Hand': but it is a wrong name, for you are both gentle and generous. But I know that you will bear nothing which is not of God's own ordering, and which therefore you cannot alter."

He turned his eyes to meet his wife's, and taking her hand, he said, "That is just what is so bad, that our righteous will cannot command obedience; that we must obey what is called prudence—especially such as we."

"Albert Glinde," said the chancellor, "is a man whom we can depend upon. He is a Mark-man through and through, as much as if he was born one."

"You need not have taken the precaution you have taken with him," said Knipprode; "he was in your interest from other causes."

"What is this—what is all this, good sirs? Has some unfortunate event happened which cannot be counteracted?" asked the Princess.

"No, no, your highness,—it is only that the Berlin people have driven their burgomaster from the towns, and with some little noise. Master Balzer got a hard knock or two on his pate!"

"I never agreed with you about him," interrupted the Mark-graf; "the man was too cunning and fawning; he was not what I would have my subjects be. Why need we have taken such a roundabout way?"

"To go straight always would be to run one's head against stone walls."

"The man is despised on every hand; his yellow face peeps at you everywhere."

“So much better a scape-goat he will be, then, to pack all the fault upon!”

“And a cringing, helpless creature!” said the chancellor; “but if we only adopted straightforward, plain spoken men, how could we get on? How can one make use of such solid masses of iron and stone, without the windlass which lifts them into their proper place without their knowing it? In deed and truth, such are not to be done without.”

“And how has it been with them?” rejoined the Mark-graf. “My judge, Balthasar Hake, in prison! Balzer’s house taken by storm, and himself barely escaped by a rope from a window! The court-house broken, my archives taken possession of, my letters, my papers, scattered about, gone into a thousand hands! Is such a thing no disgrace? Does it not cry to Heaven for vengeance?”

“A good burgomaster may hinder that,” said the Count; “Balzer has only got his due.”

“But to me—to me, Count! By all the holy saints!—if all my secrets are read and circulated!”

“There are not many in Berlin who can read,” answered the Count.

“God and his saints be my witnesses, I would willingly act openly, so that there should be nothing to read.”

Gentle and mild as was the Princess’s expression of face at ordinary times, a gleam shot across her features as she held her up and said, “As they have thus put a disgrace upon my lord’s honour, I know that he will not brook its remaining. It will

not be passed over, and they will be treated according to their deserts."

There was a silence. The chancellor shook his head, whilst the count made some courtly answer or other to the Princess; but it was not a moment for gallant rejoinder.

"Then speak, Frederick!" she said; "speak freely what it is that holds you back, and distresses you? You have thought me ever worthy till now of being confided with your cares, as you have ever shared with me your pleasures. Though I be a weak woman, and little able to understand it all, yet I can feel with you, and learn from you. Where would be our happiness, did we not joy alike and suffer alike?"

The Prince cast an open-hearted look at his wife, and he said: "It is, indeed, a balsam to one's wounds to have a faithful, true wife; for if a man has to appear falsely abroad, on account of the cunning and the wicked, at home he can be true to the good and the faithful."

"And have you to be false, Frederick?"

"It is a bad world. The life of a prince, dear wife, is a constant struggle. He were a bad captain, who always carried his plans exposed on his shield."

"But why do you not lift up your voice against Berlin, and proclaim your displeasure? You are more in the right now than when you broke their gates. They have broken their oath."

"That is just the reason. They were in the

right then, Johannes,—was it not so?—and I did it. Now that I am in the right, I cannot do it.”

“I must not do it, dear wife,” he continued, after a pause, “because I must have my eyes and ears open to matters of greater moment; because my name is extolled in foreign parts; because I am esteemed as a just and a peaceful prince, and therefore am joined by many who come of their own accord. Were I one to break down the walls of my own citizens, I should not gather, but disperse them; and he is the happiest prince who can increase his dominion by justice and the blessings of peace. I must not do it, because our quarrel with Mecklenburg is scarcely healed, and I see before me the rich inheritance of Pomerania, a possession worth ten years spent in its acquirement. Let Pomerania and the Mark be under one head, and it will form a kingdom strong and firm as any in the German land. Bordered by the sea, we shall stand fast, not compelled to turn over ever from one to the other. Therefore, our first object must be to gain the esteem of the rich towns of Pomerania; and how could I do that, if I quarrel and go to war with my own towns? Again, I must not do it, on account of my own nobles, whose mouths are watering already to break the chain which my father imposed upon them. Did I loose it, and set them on against the towns, I should lose both my nobles and my citizens. I must not do it, on account of my towns themselves; they are the heart of the

country, the nests of its wealth. It is only in them that order and peaceful arts grow, scantily though it be, in return for burgess industry. He would be a bad gardener who raked up the new sown seed. I must not do it, for the chain still holds which unites the towns in league together; and should I ride against one of them, who will say that the old thirst for war may not again fire the blood of the citizens of many cities, and a war commence, the end of which it is impossible to foresee. It is therefore, my dear wife, that though I am sovereign lord in this the Mark, I am obliged to allow my direct right to be twisted, and its brightness to be covered for a time. Yes, they who would speak for it must be silent; and I, who am the highest judge, must seek for judges to judge betwixt myself and my towns."

"And withal you are still a free and noble Prince," said the Princess, who had listened attentively, "for you know how to overcome and suppress your natural indignation."

And she sat down, and listened silently to the deliberations of the others. She did not speak except when addressed, and then she gave answers short and to the point; and not a word more did she say about her lord's honour, or the necessity of avenging it; on the contrary, she suggested lines of expediency which the others could not but approve of. If a woman is set in the right way, and is ordinarily gifted, there will many a thing occur to her which would never have occurred to a man. Should a woman, however, have

gone astray, and be cunning and passionate, she will be falser than the falsest man, and all the clever men in the world will not keep her from wrong. Let the man who possesses a good wife sufficiently prize his good fortune.

So they agreed, that as long as ever it was possible, the matter should be treated as of slight consequence; and that that which was, in real truth, rebellion against the Mark-graf, should merely be set down as an insurrection against the burgomaster: that it was necessary to employ skilful mediators, that the Prince's honour should not be compromised, and help should be sent to Balzer Boytin, but without taking the field. The towns must be written to, to give him safe conduct and a hearing, and the others, that they were not concerned in the matter, and that they should not interfere at the peril of their lord's displeasure. Should Balzer Boytin, however, not be able to make his ground good, and the opposition to him continue, the quarrel should then be brought before the states, and arbitrators be chosen on whose impartiality both parties might rely.

Such was the decision of the Prince's council, in which all agreed; a decision which, however, could give but little satisfaction to any of the parties concerned in it.

The chancellor, Johannes, betook him to his offices to dictate the letters. Count Knipprode asked leave of absence from the court, as it was his intention to ride to Franconia on a visit to the Burg-graf Albrecht, surnamed Achilles on account

of his bravery. Melancholy were the looks exchanged between the three.

“ Oh, Frederick !” said the Princess, “ would that we were there, in that beautiful land, where the people are gentle and refined.”

“ It will soon be the same here,” answered the Prince, in the tone of comfort.

“ It will be a long time first, and we shall not live to see it.”

“ Then let us comfort ourselves in the present, with the thought that we are working for the future.”

“ May your highness have fortitude enough to persevere,” said the Count, “ for many are the difficulties which beset your way.”

“ All that a man can do, that will I do.”

“ No sooner is one set aside than another springs up—I would it were otherwise ; but there is but a scanty harvest to be reaped in this land.”

“ But one may reap in every land, Konrad ; not that we must force the olive in the north, or in Africa the snowdrop. He who sows wheat in loose sand is unwise, but the painstaker will ever find patches of good soil, which will yield him four or five fold. And say to my brother Albrecht, I will not be daunted by my difficulties.”

“ Were he here he would till these thistle grounds otherwise.”

“ God made these thistles, and he will help in time of need.”

“ And the Holy Virgin !” added the pious Prin-

cess. "Say to my brother-in-law, we have placed our cause in the hands of the Queen of Heaven, and have instituted in her name the order on the Marienberg. To despair were to be faithless, for she will not forsake us."

"Amen!" said the Prince. "In her hands I place the sceptre of my kingdom."

And when the Count had taken leave, the noble Prince and his consort spoke much together confidentially, and the lady did all she could to drive the wrinkles of displeasure from her husband's brow. Alas! they returned again too soon, soon as her hand was withdrawn from his, and their eyes no longer met.

"Oh, I wish," said she, as she saw this—"oh, I wish that these towns, which cause my lord so much anxiety, were rased to the ground! You have towns enough besides them!"

He breathed freer, as if awakened from a dream, and a thought of a different nature seemed to strike him.

"In that case my archives would be burnt with them, and my letters and papers."

And he rang and summoned the Brandenburg senator to his presence, and they went together and remained awhile closeted. They sat together an hour, and Niclas Pernewitz set off immediately for Berlin with the Prince's own horses. The Mark-graf was evidently more cheerful as he returned to his noble consort.

The noble lady was busy with her needle, and

though she gave him her hand when he offered his, it was done as if scarcely of her own accord. She was pouting as sometimes the best ladies do.

They sat awhile without speaking. At last, he said—"My love is jealous!"

"Why should I be jealous," she replied; "you may sit as long as you will with Master Niclas if he knows how to console you better than your wife does."

"No one can administer comfort equal to a beloved wife."

"And yet," said she, as she put down her needle, "you shut yourself up with this tradesman senator, and speak to him what your wife must not hear, and you come back cheerful, whereas your wife was not able to make you so."

"A gentle and faithful wife," said the Prince, holding her hand in his, "is a costly treasure to any man, and he is unworthy of its possession who does not appreciate such gift of God. But even as the priest is obliged to walk the world alone and confide what he hears in the confessional to none save God alone, just in the same way the Prince has secrets, which none must hear save such as are sworn to silence. The government of a country, dear wife, is a peculiar thing; in that the Prince is like the priest, he may have no wife. Strangers are to him at times nearer than are those which else are nearest. It is hard it should be so, but so it is. I am not sorry for it. A good man shares everything with his wife, but if so be that he can keep the cares which oppress him to

himself, surely it is pleasing to him to do so ; and if he can restore to her the cheerfulness which he now feels himself, is not that pleasing to him also ? I am cheerful, do you be so too."

She leant upon his shoulder, and what they said was said in whispers, but they looked on each other right lovingly.

CHAPTER VI.

OH, who would have recognised Berlin again to have seen it on a day like this ! It was a bright day in Spring, and the last March clouds were floating away from beneath a bright blue heaven. The roofs and towers were still wet with the melting snow, and the water gurgled in the spouts and flowed away down the water-courses. The sun seemed to shine doubly bright, and the rain-drops sparkled like the costliest gems.

And the noble Spree ! What is it now to what it was in those days ? Now it is built up betwixt strong walls, and takes its way amongst piles and pillars, not as it would go, but as man would have it go. At that time it was an open broad river, and all was water where now stand the stone houses in the Burg street, and the street of the Holy Spirit ; yes, and a good deal of Broad-street, too, that which joins to the river. In Spring time especially it was very broad ; the meadows were

flooded, and there was almost a lake of water. The "Long Bridge" crossed it, and the senate-house stood in the middle—itsself an island. It was a pleasant sight to see, for much snow had fallen, and the water was higher than usual ; it is, indeed, always a noble sight to see much water, and particularly when it is in motion.

Vessels without number laid on its bosom, and all were decked out to-day with flags ; it was a merry sight to see. And there were lads and lasses in little boats, racing after anything which came floating with the stream, and making noise enough to drown the clappers of the mills, though they were clapping as if the wood and iron knew how to welcome the freedom of the cities. They, too, in token of it, were decked out with flags and coloured cloths. But the "Long Bridge" itself was the gayest sight to see. Pine trees were planted fast upon each pile, and a festoon of pine leaves ran from each to each, so that the bridge looked like a noble alley of trees. It was made thus because Berlin and Koeln were now once more united, and so the road which connected them must be dressed out, to do which the Berlin and Koeln people worked side by side, even to the wealthy patrician and his excellent lady. The senate-house, too, was covered with flags larger and more splendid than had ever been seen before. There they were waving in the wind and sparkling in the sun ; it was a sight to do a man's heart good. It brought tears to the eyes of many. There were painters, too, busy at work, renewing

its gaudy colours ; would that many a thing that is old could be made young again by being stroked over. The track of the worm, and the mould on the surface may be covered, but, alas ! the wood itself is not made new again.

Oh ! to have seen the people in the streets on either side the Spree, how they shook hands when they met, and threw themselves on one another's necks. It was just as in a town which had stood a siege, and from before which the enemy had retired. No single thought is there of the enemy's re-appearance. Better it is that it is so, for if on the removal of an evil, nothing was thought of but its return—oh, there would be no joy in the world ! And what were the world without joyousness ? It would be but one great hospital full of miseries, one misery following on the heels of the other. Did not the Creator of the universe give us wine that man may drink himself temporarily exhilarated ? And is not such a moment of exhilaration, be it the effect of wine or not, at times necessary to afford us a short space in which to forget our cares and sorrows ? to be lifted up and to gain new courage for new adventure and exertion ? And thus it was to-day in the towns. Koeln and Berlin people mixed indiscriminately, old friendships were renewed, and the wine-cup was filled on either side for the visitors from the other, to the toast—“ May our union be lasting ! ” Let any man have ventured to have said a word about the grease tub or the sausage affair, he would soon have found his way over the balusters into the Spree.

And inside the senate-house ! How cheerful everything looked there, too ! There was no quarrelling and stamping on the benches ; all were agreed, and the two parties sat together intermixed. There were still, however, many of the heads of the trades in session, notwithstanding that the covenant of Monday after Reminiscere, 1442, had been torn into a thousand pieces ; but the patricians sat there, too, and nearly the same parties we saw there before. It was delightful to see how the patricians noticed their tradesmen brother senators, and again how these latter no longer seemed to suspect every word the others uttered. How can there be any good where there is jealousy ? Let him, who has any cause for it, turn everything out of his house at once, and poke his staff into every corner. But better it is to take a good deal for granted, and where confidence is wanted to pretend it. There can be no republic without this. If it had been so always in the towns, how different would have been their position to-day ! What their position is everybody knows.

If there is any bond which can bind men of every difference of station and of opinion together, it is the agreement about acknowledged wrong which all have suffered. The farmer who suffers from want of rain, and the farmer who suffers from too much, are both agreed ; they complain against Providence, because it happened as it happened, and not otherwise. And now, were not the Berlin and Koeln people equally agreed about the Mark-

graf? It went foaming on like a swollen stream in the spring tide; it gathers and gathers, and can scarcely keep its course, for from every rivulet come also gathered waters; and even the bushes on the banks keep adding to it with their dropping tears. At last, out it bursts, breaks through its barriers, and appears as if it were about to swallow up everything.

And whilst they were agreeing as to their causes of complaint and their sufferings, they wisely turned a thought to those who had suffered in the late years of misfortune, either under the sway of the Mark-graf or of the burghers themselves. Many and many a one had been sent into exile. There was a cry, as of one voice, "All of them must be recalled!" Herr Brakow, Bartholomew Schumm's son-in-law, who had been put temporarily and irregularly into the burgomaster's seat, for it had been done in a hurry and without any opposition, stood up, and asked—"All, without exception?"

There was a moment's pause. But then came a general shout, (if any thought otherwise they kept it to themselves,) "All, without exception!" And a shout of joy went through the hall, and the news spread through the town, and many an eye shed tears of joy. So writings were at once set about, to be dispatched into all lands, partly to call them back, and partly to inform them how things stood, and demand their presence and aid.

They could have done all sorts of good things that day, for they were all agreed, and every heart

was softened by the universal joy. In such times, the heart is susceptible of the best impressions. Such opportunities occur in every state; the only sorrow is, that they who could make them of avail are too often wanting.

But when should I have accomplished the task, if I attempted to tell half of what went forward in the towns on that one day? That which a person really is he is equally in private and in public; but what he imagines himself to be, that must be published openly, or the others would not know it. The people of Berlin and Koeln imagined themselves to be free, and so the whole world must be informed of it; that was why they hung flags from their windows, dressed their gates with ever-greens, and bound ribbons round the symbols of their different trades. They, too, who had been present when Balzer Boytin's house was stormed and the Mark-graf's appointed judges put in durance, found ready listeners in those who had not been there. All that happened was told, and a good deal that had not happened. Every one kept open house, and a table laid out on the lower floor; every passer-by was called in to drink a pledge to the maintenance of freedom in the towns.

And the trades made processions with music and flying colours, and all of every class who had arms wore them, so that the appearance was sufficiently military; and they halted before the houses of the leading burgesses and patricians, the fiddlers and pipers playing, followed by cheers from the people,

and these came forward to the windows or to their doors, and addressed the people. There was no roundabout speaking wanted; too many "whens" and "ifs" would have met with no pleasant reception from the people. And to do them justice, they did speak from their hearts, for their theme was the ancient rights of the towns, hatred to the Mark-graf, and the necessity of union amongst their hearers.

The west end of the Cloister-street, where it is so narrow, was almost impassable for the crowd. It was the neighbourhood in which most of the churchmen's houses were situated—the Bishops of Brandenburg, of Lebus, and Havelberg, with many others; from thence the names of the adjoining streets, Pope-street and Bishop-street. These houses were seldom occupied by their owners, but kept up for their convenience when they had business in the towns; they were not decorated like the others, for what share had they in the delight of the citizens? the most of them were locked up, and their shutters closed. Was there not a shouting, as to where the fat paunches were hiding themselves? Whether they meant to take no part on such an occasion? Had they not wine enough in their cellars? All who had houses in the town should share bad and good with the rest. That was the least that was said, for there was no mincing about the matter. The Berlin folks were not very particular in what they said about the shaven pates. They knew very well what ban and interdict meant, and they cared little about

them. Interdicts act in one respect as earthquakes do. In hot countries they are very fearful things, but in the northern ones their effect is hardly felt. Many a Mark man had lived long under interdict, without feeling much inconvenience from it. The bishops and abbots were supposed to be friends of the Mark-graf, as they voted with him at the diets; and so how could they take part with the town people, even had they been inclined to do it. So they had good grounds for alarm, and the sweat ran down the face of many a one of them, as he remembered how short was the distance from where he sat crouching in the safest corner of his house to the churchyard of St. Mary's, where still stands the cross once wetted by the blood of the Abbot of Bernow.

To such lengths it did not proceed: many, however gave wine to the people. It is not a very safe thing to refuse an excited crowd; and besides, a butt of wine, more or less, would not much interfere with the holy father's drinking. Oh, if drinking would have relieved the miseries of the Mark people, the good prebends and dignitaries in Berlin and Koeln would have drunk enough to set them all in clover. Not so, however, the poor fainting pilgrim, for he received a very small measure, scarce enough to satisfy natural thirst. All this gave much ground for offence; for it ill becomes the guardians of the poor and the relievers of distress to throw away in luxury and excess what was piously given to administer succour to the wanting.

The press in these streets was, however, princi-

pally owing to the fact that Balzer Boytin's house stood there, or rather, had stood there. They were yet busy pulling it down. Had it not been for the interference of some thoughtful people, they would have set it on fire, and so endangered the safety of the town, for all the houses round about were built of wood, and thatched with straw. They had lighted a fire in the court-yard, as it was, and into it went all that was to be found in the way of furniture. Some were busy on the roof, tearing it to pieces ; others made light work with the windows and window-panes. It was a complete scene of destruction, and everybody was determined to have a hand in it, considering it to be a righteous work. Blood, too, had been shed, for some of the butchers who stormed the house had been wounded by Boytin's servants ; but amends had been made, as more than one of them had been carried off half-dead—still that was another reason for destroying the house. And a merry job it seemed to be. The lads cut open the beds, and rolled about in them. Every pot, pan, and utensil, was hurled through the windows. Two or three young fellows got hold of a bedstead, or a large table—out of the window it must go. “ Take care of your heads ! ” was the cry, and down it came amidst the general acclamation. Their rage against Balzer went so far, that they did not even spare his poultry : they were hunted, caught, plucked, spitted, and into the fire with them. Nothing of Balzer's should remain. But amidst all the destruction, there was not a single thing stolen.

A skirmish was very nearly occasioned, when the roof was off, by a contest between the butchers and carpenters, who should pull down the spars and beams. Properly, it was the joiners' work,—but who liked to deny the butchers the honour of completing a work they had so well begun?—and they hacked away at the wood with their slaughter-axes and knives, as if they had been bones. Meister Kuhlemey was one to strike the first blow, for he had been the first to be duped by Balzer Boytin. Balzer had talked him over against his own better judgment. His mortal hatred to the man was, therefore, mixed up with a good deal of self-reproach. Had Balzer and he met, it would have fared badly with one of them. Bartz had been one of the first to endeavour to make peace again between the patricians and the trades; for, if they were somewhat haughty, they were, nevertheless, born in the towns, and interested in their welfare. It had been seen how much trust there was to be placed in a stranger, with all his fine words. It was with great gnashing of teeth that the good master viewed the progress of the ruin, and assisted in it. The piece of the rope was still dangling from the sill, with which Balzer had lowered himself. The rope was cut before Balzer reached the ground, but he had not had far to fall, and his servants had helped him to his horses, which were at the Oderberg gate. He had heard a rumour of what was going to happen, and had sent them out, on pretence of giving them pasture.

So he got away, without being hurt by the stones and darts which were sent after him.

It was a sore matter with old Kuhlemey, and he stood up to speak, and the words he uttered were harder than the blows of his apprentices' axes. The wood came down, splintering and cracking, and down came what he said, thundering into the spectators' ears. He told them of liberty, and ancient right, of burgess blood, and burgess courage, till their eyes were damp with tears, and their fists clenched themselves with eagerness for the fray: "Whose," said he, "is the town, and whose are the houses? Did we not build them? And whose the mills? Did we not buy them? Are they not ours, of old?—ours, by virtue of seal and signature? Ours, are they—or the Mark-graf's? Ours, we who have occupied them since the land became Christianized?—or the Mark-graf's, who came but as yesterday? Ours, we who bought them with our fathers' blood!—or the Mark-graf's, who paid so many marks to the Emperor for them? They are ours, ye burghers! And does the Mark-graf deny it? Did he say a word, at first, of taking them from us? He was to protect us against our enemies. He has indeed protected us! He has stood in the way of our eyesight, lest we should see the enemy—just as the ox, which is struck at, but not killed, goes rolling about blindly, right and left, not knowing whence the blow came. Just so with us. We ran upon our own friends, and gored those who were the nearest to us. And he laughed

in his sleeve, and was glad. And what did we? Tear your hair, rend your garments, and put ashes on your heads. Worse than senseless beasts, have we raged against our own selves. We have spent our strength, we have blunted our weapons, we have hunted out the best man amongst us, and the worst have been allowed the upper hand. Yes, our good men are gone forth. Let every man of us smite on his breast, nor think himself better than his neighbour. Who is there amongst us who did not shout, 'Down with them!'—Who did not triumph when his opponent fell? Burgesses and citizens, ring all your bells, and the death-knell they toll will not sufficiently suffice! But yet once again may the bells ring merrily. And one thing, ye citizens, rejoices me. Know ye what it is? The Mark-graf found but one traitor in our walls, and that *one* we have hunted out."

A universal shout echoed the words—"Him we have hunted out!"

"Only one—men of Berlin, and men of Koeln—only one could he find among our thousands and tens of thousands. Let him rejoice, he whose heart is in the right place. They are good towns, in two of which there is but one false man. Where is he? A fugitive. Where is his house? In the dust. Where is his name? Let it be torn from our walls, and written on the pillory, there to remain for ever!"

A hundred voices shouted—"For ever!"

He went on to narrate Balzer Boytin's misdeeds,—how he had been bankrupt in Stettin and elsewhere, yet ever got money again, no one knew

how—how he had always been ready to do mischief, and to sow quarrel betwixt well-meaning people—how he had dealt in horses, up and down in the Mark, playing the spy for every party, and making known everything that was bad;—and, if such doings as that were already worthy of death, how much more was what he had done in the towns—in spurring on the tradespeople against the patricians, and bringing about the sending for the Mark-graf, who had overthrown all that was before existing, and banished many a worthy citizen;—and how he had pointed out to the people that their authorities were in the interest of the Mark-graf, and then spoken against them to the Mark-graf, as acting treacherously towards him: thus it had been that Johannes Rathenow was displaced, and banished—he and many another. Then, he had reviled the Mark-graf, too, in every cellar, in order to deceive the people, and get a party of his own. And when the masters of the guilds had warned the people against him, did he not ask, whether it was that the trades also were in the pay of the Mark-graf, and so bring it about that he was chosen burgomaster, because none of the patricians or heads of trades remained, in whom the confidence of the people had not been destroyed by his wicked tongue? And when he had contrived that, and, moreover, brought the town into ill repute with all the gentry and nobles, he had then thrown off the mask, and shewn what he really was, a servant in the pay of a master, and that master the Mark-graf; and he

had played all the rights of the towns into his hands, admitted custom-officers and servants of the Prince into their free town, besides armed men, and state-judges, who rode about as the stewards of a stranger, and poured contempt upon the burghesses, whom they treated not as free men, but as subjects. He had allowed an opening to be made in the town-wall of Koeln, that the Mark-graf might build a citadel there, thus leaving the town like a great village, into which the enemy might ride as often as it pleased him. And there it was yet, gaping like an open wound, of which every true heart in the towns must feel the pain. But they had but smelt the beginning of what was to come into the towns through that opening. Bonds and chains, and foreign manners, new taxes, and alien rule. Customs to oppress trade, and fetter manufacture. So cruel were the resolutions proposed by the Prince's council, that the Prince himself was startled at them, and had bidden them be sealed up, seeing that the time was not come when they could be put in force.

It was quite unnecessary for Bartz Kuhlemey to put the question, in conclusion, as to whether they were content with things as they had been, whether they would maintain themselves as free citizens, or be the servants of a servant of a prince. Had the Kurprince appeared before their walls with an army, they were ready, just then, to a man, to have sallied out and ventured a battle, which surely would have been a bloody one. As it was, they tore down the last remains of the horse-dealer's

house, and their shouts accompanied the dust which whirled itself into a pillar rising far into the air.

A good many now crowded away to another part of the town, where there was sport a-foot. How should so important a day pass over without merriment? The street they crowded to was near the Cloister-street. It now bears the name of Rose-street, but then it had a name which we will not mention. It was the abode of all the dissolute women in the town, who lived there under the legal superintendence of the town's executioner. In those days, these miserable people were compelled to act as scavengers, and when the streets were very full of dirt and filth, they had to go out with besoms, and sweep the mud together, and carry it away in a two-wheeled cart. Think what fun it was always for the rough lads in the streets to run after these wretches, when performing their duty, and shout at them and tease them. Indeed, it was not the rough lads alone. Modest citizens' wives now and then threw up their windows, and abused them to their heart's content; for Berlin had a great reputation for its morality as a town.

To-day, these women were employed in a very different way. They were driven to collect all the snow they could find, and to convey it in the cart to the new market-place. It was a merry sight, to see the snow falling from the roofs, as they swept it down, for it looked as if it was snowing again. They got a great deal together, though it thawed fast; and they set to work bringing it into shape,

for many a one lent a hand. At last, they made a huge snow man, and they gave it a huge nose and great eyes, and for a tongue they put a great piece of tile lolling out; then they hung rags about it, and shouted, "That is Balzer Boytin!"

They determined to sit in judgment upon him (as was always done) in the new market—a place where many a drop of blood had wetted the sand-hillock, and where also the gallows was planted. But the cry was, "No, no!—he must go before Roland! he must make amends before the justice of the town!"—and they got the monster upon a bier, and a many staves under it, and the women were forced to bear it along. Roland, as all know, is the emblem of justice in German towns; the sword in his hand is the sign that the town has the power to proceed to extreme judicature. Balzer, as the report went, had been heard to say, whilst he was burgomaster, that there would be no good done until the sword was taken out of hands like those of the stone-hewn Roland, and given to one who knew better how to use it.

The man of snow was taken, therefore, from the new market to the place near St. Nicholas's, where stood the statue of Roland. There was no lack of noise on the occasion, and the accompaniment was a good imitation of the music performed by cats when wandering over the house-tops at night, or it was rather a sort of kettle music, such as newly-married people, when disliked by their neighbours, are sometimes favoured with—the instruments being old pots, kettles, pokers, and shovels, uniting

in extempore melody. But as the snow man kept trembling and threatening to fall from his high elevation, it was deemed necessary that two of the ladies should mount the car to support him. This made the mirth greater, for the supporters had difficulty in retaining their position, and the increase of weight made the work more difficult for the others, who were pelted by the lads with snow and dirt when they stopped. The crowd sang doggerel verses, which were long remembered in Berlin :

“ Balzer Boytin, good man,
See how he must go !
Not as burgomaster,
But as man of snow !
With him all his wives,
Happy be their lives !
Berlin folk refused him,
Koelnern never chose him ! ”

It was with no small difficulty that they got him whole as far as the Place of St. Nicholas. The crowd there was excessive—windows, doors, the very roofs were all crowded with anxious and excited gazers, and all of them were not mean people ; there were both patricians and senators. Who is there that dislikes a bit of fun, especially when its object is one which goes home to every heart ?

And yet, whilst, as we said, the houses were full, and the windows crowded, there was yet one house which shewed no signs of life, and in which the windows were kept closed, and the windows remained green and yellow, even though the sun shone on them, and the spider spun his web across

them ; indeed, the house's whole appearance was grey and desolate, as if no one occupied it. The gable, too, hung threatening over the street, for the iron bar which bound it to the side walls had rusted and severed. The roof shewed signs of decay ; no one had repaired it. The dragon's head, which carried the water from the roof to the street, hung its head low, swinging in the wind as if a knight had cleaved its neck half across. It was the house of the Rathenows. Grass had grown on the threshold, and had withered, and seldom had the door been opened, save after dark, or in the morning, earlier than the arrival of the market folk, when an old woman might sometimes be seen going in and out. No sound had been heard within its walls, save perhaps a dry cough, or sometimes a broken religious canticle. The people avoided Nurse Gertrude, and she avoided them, for they told all sorts of mysterious things about her. She was the widow of Martin Wardenberg, who died on the scaffold long ago in the new market ; and old as she was, she always spoke of it as if it had but happened the day before. They whispered that she had foretold all that had come upon the towns ; she had told her cousin, too, who was at one time burgomaster, that all would happen as it had happened, only he had not heeded what she said, and that was why misfortune had befallen him. No one listened to her, till all came true, just as she had said ; the Rathenows' race was extinguished, and the last of them gone into exile, she alone remaining to keep charge of the house,

inside which no one cared to set foot. The people had much to tell about her prophecies—the old huckster women especially—how she had foretold the downfall of the town; and they loved to talk of it when the wind was whistling in the corners of the church, and howling over the roofs.

The people had brought the effigy to before the statue of Roland, and had woven garlands around the statue's shoulders, adjuring him to judge the wretch who had reviled both him and his town. Just then, in the middle of the loud laughing, a far different tone made itself heard. It was as when the string of a musical instrument snaps, and gives a jarring sound. It was thus that a hoarse voice asked aloud, "What would ye there?" The upper window in the house had opened, and there stood the old woman, leaning out, looking like the figure of death, with a few grey hairs streaming over its head; it was enough to put a stop at once to the general feeling of mirthfulness. The laugh died away into a dead silence; only a few, who stood near, whispered each other, "It is the old witch!"

"What would ye there?" she asked. There was no answer.

"Does the sun shine once more into your nests, that ye make merry, ye short-sighted ones? Ye are below there—I am above. The clouds gather again yonder, the sunlight will soon be hidden."

There was only one who spoke, and he was a tanner's lad. He shouted, "Fiddle de dee—it's all one to me!" The tanners are strange people; they care nought about the smell of brimstone,

for nothing can stink worse than their workshops; nor do they fear the plague, for it never comes near them. People who are busy beating leather may, perhaps, have singular thoughts. They may think we are all in one skin, and when it comes to be tanned, one is much like the other. A tanner's lad may well not fear a witch.

The lad swung his cap over his head; he shouted: "Our Roland is there yet—let us have the burgomaster's head off!"

"Your Roland has judged his last," croaked forth the old woman—"he will judge no more; his hour has come. Oh, ye foolish citizens! why do ye crown a corpse with fresh garlands? Look at him well—he is green already; but it is not the green of spring—it is rot! He has drank deep of burgess's blood, and would have rest, but ye grant it him not. Take from him his garlands!" she screamed, at the top of her voice, swinging at the same time her skeleton arms—"there comes a stronger one, who will dash to pieces your strong ones. Creep into your huts—hide your heads under your bushels, lest you call him hither who will have retribution. Your debtor-book is full; pray, pray on your bended knees that the leaves cleave fast together, to hide the noble blood ye have spilled! Oh, ye wretched people! oh, ye monstrous evil-doers! if he comes with a high hand, how will it fare with you! Tear off his garlands!" she screamed still louder, "Roland of Berlin judges no living man more!"

“ Save one, who has been condemned already,” said a voice from the crowd.

“ Not even the man of snow!” she shouted. “ He is a judge no longer! Deposed he is——”

“ Pray God, not!” said the same voice; and a man came forward from the crowd. The voice struck the ears of several, as well known; and as one and another caught sight of him, a strange murmur ran through the crowd. Many fell back, gazing long upon him, as if he were a spirit. They thought they knew him, and yet could not believe it. Just at that moment, the snow man crumbled down; his head gave way, and he fell down prostrate at Roland’s feet. There was a moment’s quiet; it was but for a moment, like the pause before the storm. Then arose as one voice the cry, “ He has judged; our Ronald has given judgment!”

“ And will do so long,” said the voice which had been heard before; “ for who is the citizen who would take the sword from his hand?”

“ Johannes Rathenow!” screamed the old woman, lifting up both her arms, and gazing on him with her glassy eyes.

“ Johannes Rathenow!” echoed one, then another, then ten, then hundreds and hundreds. It ran along the crowd, a clear, loud, not-to-be-mistaken shout—“ Johannes Rathenow is here! Johannes Rathenow has come back! Johannes Rathenow is amongst us!” They rushed forward to see him; every one pressed forward to get a

sight of him: all wanted to shake him by the hand; all rancorous feeling was forgotten. Johannes Rathenow had been the last burgomaster of what appeared to them the age of gold. He was once more there, risen as out of the earth. Why should not the old times come back, too? "Long life to Johannes!" "The good old times!" Not a word could the old man answer. "To the senate-house!" was the cry; and leaving the snow effigy to the refuse of the crowd, they seized him, and hoisting him high on their shoulders, they bore him away in triumph to the Long Bridge.

CHAPTER VII.

It came into no one's head to ask who had recalled Johannes Rathenow, or whether the outlawry against him was reversed, nor even how he entered the gates. Every window was flung open, every one who could, hurried into the street to get a sight of the old man; and far away, before him and his bearers, went his name. It had reached the senate-house before he had turned from St. Nicholas, and when he was in Oderberg-street there was not one who did not know it in the most distant part of Koeln.

It seemed to the old man like a dream. He let them do with him as they would, and they bore him steadily along, having got on the way a proper chair for him to sit in; but on recovering the shock of his first reception, he knew not how he felt. The other time came vividly before his mind, when his name had equally been on every tongue; but, alas! far otherwise. They had stoned

him, and would have torn him in pieces ; and were not these the very same people ?—or could it be that the old race was altogether extinct, and a new generation grown up ? He looked round him—they were the same faces, but they had forgotten that which to him was as well remembered as if it had happened but yesterday.

He had not forgotten it ; and whilst every face which greeted him was radiant with joy, his remained grave. There was a twitching about his lips ; his eyes looked searchingly around ; there was something in the expression of his countenance which said, “ Will ye be waving your hats to me to-morrow, and not the next day driving me forth like a wild beast ? ” There was no thought of that sort amongst the crowds below him ; they thought but of to-day, and if of to-morrow, it was as of a rosy-red coming morning. Where a multitude of people are enraged, they must have a scapegoat ; when it is merry, it must have a something to fawn upon. Idols will be created where they do not chance to come of themselves, and, besides, it is no new thing to prop new hopes upon an old name. Let there be a split in a commonwealth, and the last regime have totally failed, one is apt to look for something that stood in its place before ; for one regards as good that which was before the bad, and its rags and tatters are held up and shewn as relics, and they look to the men who have survived the unhappy days to put them in the same position they were in before.

The golden age can, however, be brought back

by none, for every period of time has its own good and bad, its own allowance of what is golden ; and this must be coined as it best may, and taken at as high a value as the time allows. There is never much gold ; but they who know how, have found an equal quantity in every age. There is no fairer gold than that which the light of the sun pours down, and it shines in every year ; and the man is a fool who lets the sunshiny days pass over, and neither sows nor reaps. There are but a certain number of them, and when they are passed they cannot be had again.

And so it was, whilst they were shedding tears of joyful recognition, and shouting about him, and expressing hopes of this and that, he himself bent his head without a word, and it was with an almost sorrowful air that he returned the greetings of his former acquaintances. But what was the talk about him in the town ?—Of his bravery ; how his wishes had ever been for the town ; how he had preached concord, and urged to mutual defence against the common enemy ; how he had ever lent an ear to the prayer of the lowly, and shewed a stern front to those who would oppress them. They spoke of his justice, and wished he had remained poor in the office, in which others had become rich. All his failings were forgotten, and they lacked words to say all they could say in his favour, though they found words to tell of many things which had never happened. So it is with men ; when they are a little excited, they are hurried along without bound or limit. In fact,

they did not stop short of making a prophet of him, and all agreed that had they listened to him, things would have been vastly otherwise.

Herr Thomas Wyns, happening to stand at a corner, was able to reach his hand. The bearers had to pause a moment, for the crowd was impassable.

"How do you feel, Johannes?" he whispered, taking both his hands in his, his face beaming with sincere pleasure, for he wished him well.

"It is to me as if I had been dead," answered Johannes.

"How so, dear friend? You see how the people love you."

"They have forgotten me," replied the outlawed man; "I am to them as some one new. When they find that I am the old one still, how will it be then?"

But there was no time for conference; the mass rolled onwards again, and the blowing of trumpets and the squeaking of the fiddles was audible as they approached the senate-house. Strange thoughts arose in his mind as he found himself once more on the actual Long Bridge, borne shoulder-high, the people of Berlin, and the people of Koeln, alike shouting "Welcome;" for from all sides, and as with one voice, the cry arose — "We are bringing our burgomaster!" "Johannes Rathenow is burgomaster!" "He will defend the towns' rights—he is the right one!" and others cried "Down with his enemies!" whilst there was no opposing voice. A strange feeling possessed

the old man's mind, for just as the clouds were driving along before his eyes in the distance, just so all the persecution he had suffered, all his disgrace and shame, passed over his mind. Moments like the present one had ever been seized on by his enemies to turn the tide of popular feeling against those they would ruin. And now the stream was with him, and he could turn it how he would: a single word would have been enough—he would be revenged on his enemies; and there was a something of the sort in his look. Who is indifferent when the time is come which may see him revenged on those who have brought ruin and shame on his unoffending head? He saw the faces of his enemies on the roofs, in the windows, in the senate-house, and his look grew dark; but the struggle within lasted not long. He struck himself on the breast: “It was not for myself that I came hither, it was for my town.”

They drew near the senate-house; and just then the trumpets blew a long blast, and the people saw a man come forward with a paper in his hand, which, after reading it, he tore into small pieces, and scattered to the wind. It was the writ of outlawry against Johannes Rathenow. The senate cancelled it, as having been issued at a time when the towns were not free, and at the suggestion of wicked persons, whose treachery had since come to light. The shout now arose still louder, and Johannes Rathenow was received, not as one returning from banishment, but rather as a conqueror, who, after delivering his town, is met by the thanks of senator

and citizen. And so it was that they received him, patrician and commoner—each would be the first to shake him by the hand.

Strange enough, the very first person who succeeded in gaining his hand, as he stepped over the threshold of the senate-house, was Mathis Blankenfelde.

“Welcome, Johannes, into your house,” he said.

“Into yours,” he answered, and a cloud gathered on his brow; his hand lay cold and stiff in that of Mathis.

Blankenfelde smiled: “It has not been worth living in since you left it.”

“It was no senate-house—it was a ridicule of the name,” said Hoppenrade.

“You have endured much, and we perhaps not much less,” continued Blankenfelde; “the town and council would willingly tear many leaves out of their book. Will not you, Johannes, forgive and forget?”

“Forgive and forget,” was echoed by many voices, and the cold hand of the old man grew warm in that of Blankenfelde. He pressed his hand, and looking him full in the face, he said—

“Herr Mathis, to you an old man’s forgiveness can matter little. His days will not be many, but yours may be long. You do well to forget, and to cherish in your heart new and better thoughts. Do that, and Johannes Rathenow will also agree to forget.”

This gave satisfaction to all. There were some who said that Blankenfelde had taken this course

because his reputation was gone, and he could not do better; but who can pretend to read the secret thoughts of men? There are times when even bad men will do virtuous deeds; and the man who generally seeks his own advantage, and glories in the failings of others, even such a one may at times be moved, and wish well to others; and this was truly such a time, that a man might well forget his own, in the welfare of the common weal.

How many of them proffered their assistance, as Johannes now took his way up the stairs! Some squeezed his hand, others nodded their welcome from a distance; some could not contain themselves, and fell upon his neck. Konrad Ryke stood on the stairs-top, offering his hand: "We were not," he said, "the best friends, but you were ever an honourable man; as such I always esteemed you, and was not deceived."

"Would to God," answered Johannes, "that good men had never worse enemies!"

All who were in the hall stood up, and made way for him, the tradesfolks as well as others, though they looked as if they knew they were out of place, and did not venture to offer their hands. Bartholomew Schumm met him face to face, and shook his head heartily; he then gave him his hand, and clapped his other on that of Rathenow: "Welcome, Johannes!—but why so late?"

"Better late than never!" cried Tilly Bruck.

"Your head is grey, your locks are white, Johannes; too fine an edge makes full of notches!"

"Age has done its work with us all," answered Rathenow, as Herr Brakow, the till now burgo-

master, led him by the arm to the burgomaster's chair, in which he had so often sat. He held back, and made negative signs with his hand; but a universal shout arose, "He must sit there!—the old times are come again, and he is burgomaster just as he was before, when the Mark-graf stormed the gate in the year '42!"

Johannes sighed deeply, and sat him down. His head rested on his hand, for he was weary; his eye meanwhile glanced over the room, as if counting who were absent; a deep silence pervaded all. "Who can call back the olden time!" thought the old man, as he beheld so many new faces. How many of the former senators were dead!—how altered the appearance of many there!—and was he himself the same? Then he was strong, and full of manly fire. What was he to-day? The others probably thought the same—how time had altered him, and what had befallen them; it was not to be swept away like cobwebs from the roof beams. The sun, glancing into the hall, declared how all was altered. The people made a confused noise outside, but on the benches all was still. It was as if time had weighted his feathery wing with lead.

At last Johannes began to speak—

"Ye have called an old man back again into your ruler's seat. He thinks, good friends, that the times are new, and bad. There is need of youthful energy; my arm is withered, my feet are weary with treading the paths of sorrow, my eyes are failing. What is it such as I can do for you?"

“Your experience!” said a voice.

“We need men,” said Konrad Kyke, “who can forget the years of disgrace and wretched disunion which have eaten us up. We want that honesty of old, which will help us once more to think of freedom, as we once thought, and to be free again, as we were free before.”

“We want deeds!” shouted Pawel Strobant; “we have had words enough, and no good came of them!”

And many spoke, and many complained. The old man had to hear once more the evils which had befallen the towns in his absence. His heart sympathized with all; all, however, who spoke, had something to say about the fault not being theirs, of having acted as had been done towards the Rathenows.

“Dear friends, and noble gentlemen,” began Johannes, rising from his seat, “from to-day all shall be forgotten, buried as in a deep well; let each throw stones and rubbish into it, lest any taste again of its muddy waters. Yes, and truly, we have far other things to think of than our past errors, and every moment is lost in which we talk of what has been, and not of that which is to be, and to be otherwise. I had promised myself, as far as I could promise myself, that I would never set foot again within your walls; ye know the reason why. But when I heard in Brandenburg of your necessity and your peril, my resolution wavered. I said to myself, ‘Johannes Rathenow, as far as he is concerned, has for ever closed account

with the people of Berlin and Koeln; but Johannes Rathenow is not his own alone—he is the son of his fathers, he is the property of his towns; they have claims upon him, and can call upon him when they need his help.’ I came, therefore, not asking even for safe conduct; and I had come, though I had known that my outlawry was yet in force, and that my head had been at your disposal. I come, but not to share your rejoicings—I come to share your necessity and your perils. I see nought that is joyous in prospect—perhaps it is that I am old; your fiddles and your trumpets give me no pleasure—it may be that my ear waxes deaf; the colours on your roof show no bright colours to me, they seemed grey—it may be my eye is not able to distinguish gay colours. I have come to share your pains, as it was my duty to do, seeing that I am a limb of your body. It is not honour I seek; let that fall upon another, for our glory may be turned into shame. We are too weak, sirs, and the Mark-graf is too strong; but the weak may become strong, if so be that he shrinks not from doing his duty and maintaining his right to the last. If ye are willing to do this, then I will rejoice. It will be the last rejoicing of the old man!”

“God knows I do it not of my own accord,” continued Johannes, after a pause—“I am not he who formerly opposed his front to the storm, and the storms we have to encounter now will rage fiercer than those of old. Ye gentlemen know not what it is to wander forth, and live in exile. I know it,

and am weary, and would fain spend my parting days in peace : I would not have to go forth a second time."

"That you never shall!—that you never shall!" resounded from all sides.

"It was Balzer Boytin who did the mischief!"

"We have had our lesson!" put in Konrad Ryke.

"And if you go forth again," said Herr Brakow, soothingly, "I at least will go with you!"—and he put his arm under the burgomaster's, as if to support him.

"Thanks, thanks, dear Brakow! But no one knows here which of us may yet suffer exile. Balzer Boytin has played his part, and now will come the one for whom he played, and he himself will play, not with pipe and flute, but with the trumpet and the drum, and your walls will quiver at the sound, and your houses tremble. But fear not, sirs, on that account; ye have not chosen one who will fear for that. Ye have torn the writ which made him an outlaw; ye have given him back his honours, ye have placed confidence in him, not requiring a surety, nor asking whether he may not be an envoy and secret friend of the Mark-graf's. It is a great honour, and a noble confidence; therefore, sirs, on my shoulders do I take this heavy burthen, though it cost me the old head which rests upon them. I am your burgomaster!"

Not an eye was there in the assembly but was wet. For a moment there was a pause, and then there broke out one universal burst of joy. Again

they pressed around him, and again sought his hand and his smile of recognition. Much as Johannes had undergone, a moment like that will go far to compensate, and to do something even to reward a noble-minded man.

A new spark seemed now to have lit up in his breast, he seemed to recover his youthful strength, and his eyes sparkled. The doors were now closed, and they sat down round the tables. The towns' books were opened, that correct information about what had occurred might be laid before the long absent burgomaster. No sigh escaped him, nor did he betray a feeling of displeasure, as the recital went on. When anything claimed immediate attention, he gave succinct orders what was to be done. He signed the letters to the other towns, certified the messengers, and saw all recorded.

It was a pleasure to see how the other senators strove together, who should be most ready to carry out what he ordered. The matter before them was to raise a fund wherewith to strengthen the defences of the towns. They stood in need of artillery, for the time had arrived when no town could longer be defended without artillery. There was, however, a dissentient voice heard from amongst the trades-chosen senators: "Why should we have aught to pay now that we are free, and have driven our tax-masters from the town?" And there had like to have been some commotion.

"This must not be!" shouted Peter Brakow. "Do I doubt that the trades will be behind the

patricians in well-doing ? As we have striven wrongfully, let us now strive together lawfully, and emulate one another in good works."

And he opened a blank page of the towns' book, and said : " Let every one enter his name here for what he can give ; it is good money, which is cheerfully given."

And the speaker wrote down his name first, " Peter Brakow," and a round sum of money he wrote after it : and all hastened with one consent to follow his example. Some, perhaps, did it grudgingly, but no one would do less than the others ; and many a one put down more than he could well afford, impelled by vanity. Never mind that, it was for a good purpose. Johannes Rathenow might well rejoice to see it, but it recalled melancholy thoughts. He could not enter his name with his gift ; but still he had done more than all the rest, for it was owing to him that it was as it was. Bartholomew Schumm took the pen at last, and put down nearly as many score groschens as all the others put together. It caused general surprise. That was what pleased him well, and he spake never a word, but made as if it was nothing. The sturdy tradesmen had nothing more to say now, and all consented to the rate which was to be levied upon the town in general.

They were now all of one mind, save when they came to read the letters which the towns had been about to send to foreign princes and powers. Johannes shook his head, and advised that they

should not be sent. "However rightful," he said, "may be our quarrel with our recognised head, and however just it may be that we take up arms against him to defend that which he would deprive us of unlawfully, still we should not forget that we are Mark-men, and that he is our Prince. It is a matter which, as when members of a family fall out, brooks not the intermeddling of strangers. We should rather quarrel, and make it up amongst ourselves, for he whom we differ with is of our blood, and his honour is as our own."

Some were with him, others against.

"How is he of our blood?" cried Pawel Strobant.

"He speaks German, and we Saxon."

"But he is not the less our Prince, recognised by the Emperor and by the states, and we have done homage to him. He has right on his side, and so have we on ours."

"Right has nothing to do with it here!" shouted Strobant. "The only question is, who has the might?"

"Without right, good sirs, nothing on earth should be done," rejoined the burgomaster. "The difficulty is to discover what the right is."

There was much dispute about it, but without irritation; but at last it was determined that the letters should be laid by for a while; and that, instead of them, the secretary should write letters to the great professors of law at Prague and Leipzig, to inquire whether the towns of Berlin and Koeln could rightfully maintain their quarrel with the Mark-graf. These were dispatched, together with

those to the towns in the Mark, and also to the nobles who were princes of the empire, requiring their assistance, as well in defence of their common rights as of those of the Emperor. It is easy to suppose that the days succeeding this were busy days in Berlin. Every helmet and coat of mail was burnished bright, the armorers were kept at work, every anvil rang from morning to night. Double watches were posted at wall and gate, and scouts were sent out in every direction. Nothing less was expected than that the Mark-graf would appear before the town, and besiege it with man and horse. Oxen in great quantities were driven into the town from the neighbouring villages, and waggons of provender came in hourly, so laden that they could scarcely pass the gates; and the citizens did nought save practice the use of their cross-bows and other weapons in the open places, whilst the clatter of men walking the streets in complete armour was heard early and late.

The most bustle was on the Koeln side, at the spot where the barber's booth had stood, for in that place the foundation walls of the new castle had already been laid down. The work was now at a stand-still, and, to tell the truth, not a great deal had been done, for the work-people had been incessantly tormented by the town's-people, the slates broken, the stones upset, and the wood chopped to pieces; besides, every one stole whatever he could,—not for the value, but for the sake of hindrance, for the forests close by supplied what every citizen wanted in the way of wood.

The town's wall had been broken down, making a gap which the castle walls would have made good, only as yet they were scarcely above the ground. There was a great hole, therefore, in the net, large enough to let any one through, only for the water and the swampy ground. It was here, therefore, that work was wanted, and quickly too. A wall was not so easy to get together, nor yet an earth-mound. The burgomaster and senate ordered, therefore, a woodwork of blocks of timber to be built up, with its basis on the wall of the Prince's intended castle. In after days there was a good deal of writing and commenting about this same woodwork, for the Prince considered its erection as the greatest insult of all; and to be sure, to drive down piles, and hammer together a vast edifice of planks and barks, just where the Prince's walls were, and all against himself, was irritating enough,—it was a sort of mockery.

So, at least, the burgesses thought, and they took pleasure in doing themselves what they might well have left the lower class of people to do for them; but the whole town was agog, and every one lent a helping hand. The richest patricians, old men as well as the youngest lads, such as had never laid hand to work before, might now be seen dragging the piles to where they were wanted; and patrician and commoner walking under either end of the same heavy plank. It was, at the same time, a complete festival. The rich brought wine and beer for the use of the poor, and they drank together to the prosperity of their undertaking and

the towns' freedom. It gave an opportunity of judging what a people can do when all are of one mind, and each ready to do his own share, and more. It would have taken a week to get the thing together had it been done for weekly wages; as it was, however, it was begun and finished on the same day, for they worked till midnight, by the light of torches and great fires.

But the Mark-graf, the object of their fear, did not present himself; in vain did the watchers on the towers look out for the waving of approaching flag and pennon; the scouts who had lain out towards Spandow came in again, having seen nothing; and a townsman, who had been to the market in Spandow, brought word that all was quiet there, that the great folks were banqueting and carousing, and there was no talk about any attack upon Berlin. This was good news, and the crests of the burgesses rose very high. Many a one was heard that night to say, that the Mark-graf had better come, he would find his bed warmed for him; but this was after a cup of wine.

The senators put no confidence in the quiet aspect of things; but they were not a little surprised, when, on the coming of a rider from the Mark-graf, they received, not a cartel breathing death and destruction, but only a writing from the Prince's council. This was to inform them that they were excessively astonished at what they had heard from the towns; that the towns should, by all means, at once set Balthasar Hake, the Prince's advocate, at liberty, and forthwith seal up

again the Prince's archives, which some of them, it was said, had broken open, for the council had had the greatest difficulty in keeping all this from the Prince's knowledge, who would be terribly enraged should he come to know it; they begged the senate, therefore, inasmuch as they were good and faithful subjects, to set the matter right at once.

The good folks opened their eyes wide at this, and more than one face relaxed itself into a smile; but all breathed lighter.

"By Saint Peter!" articulated Claus Moeves; "what deaf ears the Mark-graf must have to have heard nothing, and yet his senate to hear it."

Well, the good gentlemen's courage did rise at this, and had it not been for Johannes Rathenow and Konrad Ryke, they would have returned a written answer, about which the Mark-graf would have had to be kept equally in the dark. But the moderate opinions gained the day, for all were glad that the Prince's council had not driven them to extremities, for how would they have managed to defend themselves had the Mark-graf advanced upon the town at once. Delay seemed to offer them help from every quarter, and an affair which is protracted may be brought to an end otherwise than as is feared, and even otherwise than is hoped. They therefore wrote a letter back, worded as carefully as the one they received. It was full of allegiance, laying the blame of all that happened on Balzer Boytin, who, by his false and outrageous dealings, had driven the burgesses to desperation, for the man had made unwarranted use of the

name of his gracious highness, wherefore it was with difficulty that the mob had been restrained from tearing the said Balzer Boytin to pieces, the name of the Mark-graf having been brought by him into disrepute; their resistance, therefore, however ill it had been reported, was indeed a meritorious deed, for this Balzer had been a false and wicked servant, reporting lyingly to his master, and again laying the fault of all his evil doings towards the burgesses at the door of the Mark-graf. They were ready to deliver up Balthasar Hake, who had only been set fast because he had played the same game as Balzer Boytin, only they wanted to see first how matters stood betwixt them. And the letter finished with a great deal more about respect and submission, to all which Mathis Blankenfelde contributed largely.

Balthasar Hake was the object of their particular dislike, for he had conducted himself arrogantly towards both patrician and plebeian; he was a stern, rugged man. There was no one sorry that he should be in prison; they put him there because he wished to imprison a townsman whom Balzer Boytin had previously summoned, but, whom the sheriffs would not find guilty, because he had done nothing more than Boytin had before being made burgomaster; he was accused of defaming the Mark-graf in a wine-house. Balthasar Hake had therefore been put into the prison, which he intended for the acquitted person, and it was owing to Boytin's interference in the matter that the storm against himself had burst. Johannes Ra-

thenow was not of opinion that the towns could imprison a man who was the Prince's officer, and not theirs; but he failed in carrying his point, for the senators appealed to the old statutes, and Hoppenrade found up a decree of the time of Saint Ambrose, A.D. 1317, wherein Waldemar the Great had determined, "That we are agreed that our own subjects and vassals shall give account of themselves for any misdeed done by them in Berlin before the court of sheriffs of the said town, &c." The seal upon the decree remained unbroken, (it may be seen to this day,) and as witnesses thereto were the names of Duke Rudolph of Saxony, Herr Conrad von Redern, Herr Frederick von Alvensleben, and many more.

Before such testimony, Johannes Rathenow was obliged to give way, though he did it unwillingly. The senators were, however, in their glory, and they ordered copies of the decree to be prepared, and sent out with the different letters, as another proof that they were in the right; and it did not appear that the licence thus given by Duke Waldemar had been rescinded by any later edict.

At this time, a good many strangers visited the towns; they were nobles of different degrees and burgesses of other towns. They came on the pretence of business or merely as journeying through, though they all knew well enough what was on foot betwixt the towns and the Mark-graf. The most of them counselled peace, only very few of them urged resistance; but the very fact made the townsmen more stubborn. "He fears," said

they, "to meet us with open force—he wishes to overcome us by guile." Others said, that, from the ceremony with which they were treated, and from the good words they had had given them, it was evident of how much importance their two towns were to the Mark-graf; and so much more should it be a point of honour with them to cleave fast to their rights, let the Prince's promises be as flattering as they might. If he should prevail against them, he would have but easy work with the other towns. His father, Frederick the First, had failed ten years before in his attempts on Frankfort on the Oder, and just so they would take care that the son should not prevail here. Should they fall, the others would fall; but the disgrace would lie upon the one who fell the first.

Thus argued the more determined of the senators of either town, and Johannes Rathenow could not but rejoice in their decision. He esteemed it to be just and right; and that, if all the towns in the Mark had held to the same, things would have never come to what they were.

Niclas Pernewitz was once more in Berlin. He did not announce himself as a delegate from Old and New Brandenburg; he came but as a merchant, to see what was to be done about the slates which he had supplied for the castle, because Bertold von Dasseleben was holding him answerable for damage and loss. Nevertheless, he busied himself in canvassing the senators separately, and spoke in favour of conciliation. He gave more than one banquet at his inn, till the very tables

groaned, and the sweet wine flowed in actual streams. But the good gentlemen were not to be talked out of their opinions ; and wherever it was that the glasses clinked, whether in the Brothers'-street or on the Oderberg, Herr Niclas went away generally with a light head, but by no means with a light heart.

“ God knows,” said he to himself, “ what has possessed these Berlin people ! Had they been so always, it would have been different. But is this the best time to be what they are ?” For go where he would, he met with nothing but determination, but still modestly expressed. They each of them said it was nowise seemly for any single one of them to decide upon what was a matter for the consideration of all. “ Good heavens !” said he on such occasions, “ it is you who do it ! What you decide on, they do. You are *the all* you talk of.” But in answer, he got nothing but lectures, how that he himself had taken the part of the lower classes ; for had the patricians remained at the helm of affairs, the thing would never have got to where it was. “ Go,” said they, “ and settle it with the guild folk, and you will see how much is to be done with them. We were their masters once, now they are ours.” Herr Pernewitz would have soon taken himself away, had not he expected much that was to come.

The Mark-graf sent a reply to the letter received from the towns, and equally scrupulously worded with the other. There stood in it that he was thankful that his people held him in such

high estimation, and he knew full well that they who excited the people and defamed him, were only a few evil-disposed persons; he knew also that the senate and better people of Berlin and Koeln entirely condemned the violent steps that had been taken. Therefore, as the dispute was about to be settled, for Balzer Boytin had also his charges to bring, and had appealed to him, the Mark-graf, he desired that they should give Balzer Boytin safe conduct as he himself had done, that he might appear amongst them and secure his property. A letter to the same effect was also received from Balzer Boytin, and the superscription read—"This letter to the most worshipful the senate of Berlin and Koeln, my good friends and masters."

The senate, however, answered this latter one thus:—"We hereby greet you, good Balzer. As to what you have written to us respecting the safe conduct of our gracious Prince and Mark-graf, and that we should give you the like in order that you may dispose of your property and take it away with you in peace, be informed that we cannot write to you now respecting that. But if it be your will to dispose of your property, it is for you to do it. Given under the seal of the town, &c., &c."

A long time passed over, and letters went to and fro; but there was a good deal of preparation being made in secret; friends were gained, and reports spread about. The Brandenburg senator had at length become weary, and betook him one

evening to his old friend to announce to him his intended departure the following day.

“Can you not await its termination?” asked Johannes, with a smile.

“Hope and expectation has no end,” he answered; “and I leave you to make rhyme of it. The Berlin people have no need of one more fool than they have at present. My wife waits for me at home. I have talked till my throat is dry. The Mark-graf may send some one else. If his secrets were only laid open, they would fly to him like swallows in spring fly into his court-yard without all this bother. What need has he of secrets!”

“Wait awhile, Herr Niclas Pernewitz, the senate held to-day a private session. It lasted two hours, and there was warm work. They said if we were only to look into the papers and letters, we should be able to get behind much which would prove to the Mark-graf's discredit. God forbid that we should, I answered, or that discredit should fall upon one who is our ruler! For if it falls upon the lord, does it not fall upon the servant also? And what would his shame profit us? What is our gain, we who are here for a pure purpose, in meddling with another person's uncleanness. It were a cause for new quarrel and new vexation, and have we not agreed to forget and forgive all that has happened?”

“It had its effect, had it not?” asked Herr Niclas. “The proposers would be glad to hide their heads.”

“In spring, when they clear away the snow and ice, they clear away also the mud that lies under it, and both go together outside the door, no one asking how much there is in order to give account of it. I told them that, and carried my point.”

“How?” asked Niclas Pernewitz.

At that moment the door opened, and Andreas the summoner brought into the room an immense packet of papers, having got it up stairs with difficulty.

“There it is, your worship; it is frightful how much people have to write in these days.”

“There it is,” said the burgomaster, with a nod of approval, motioning the servant to withdraw. “There they lie, his highness’s secrets, and I give you my word of honour no soul has looked into them.”

“I believe it.”

“The senate has given them over to me, to do with them, on my oath and my conscience, as I think best for the towns. And I will do it. It is not seemly, nor will it profit us, that we see that which the prince, our master, would hold secret from us. Take, therefore, the papers, Herr Pernewitz, but speedily, and in quiet; load them into your carriage, and away with them to their owner.”

Pernewitz looked at him for a moment, with open eyes, but his face soon relaxed into a smile of delight: “Good friend, but will you venture to do it.”

“I will. But quick! Away with them, before they perchance determine otherwise.”

“Good God, Johannes! May Heaven reward you, and the Mark-graf will. But the people here——”

“I tell you, away with them!”

“Dear friend, if they find it out. But see, I’ll tell you what you may say, for truly I would not do anything for the sake of the Mark-graf, which would bring you into danger.”

And he proposed to him to get a great lot of worthless papers, and make a bundle of them similar to the bundle of the archives: “Go with it,” he said, “to the senate-house to-morrow, and have a large fire made before the house, and say to the senate there was nothing worth reading in the papers, nor worth aught but burning. By such means you serve two purposes: you do the Mark-graf a great service, and you save yourself.”

“I would fain not serve two masters,” answered Johannes. “What I do I do openly, and I will answer openly for all I do. I do not love secrets. So get me these away as soon as you can.”

The Brandenburger seized his friend’s hand: “You are a noble man,” said he, “and the Mark-graf has one secret friend in Berlin whom he little thinks of.”

Johannes drew back his hand, and an expression of displeasure crossed his brow: “Now, God forbid that he should think so. Most wonderfully mistaken would he be. I serve my town, and am its friend; tell him that, Herr Pernewitz, and tell the same to all with whom you speak. And none other am I—nothing underneath, Herr Pernewitz.

These limbs of mine are old, these bones are marrowless, but say to him, should he come before the walls of Berlin, and would bend one hair of the town's right, he will see me on the walls in armour, and with the bow, and, God forgive me, if it be my fate to loose a bolt against him who is my gracious prince."

Herr Pernewitz saw now, plainly enough, that there was nothing more to be said, and well pleased he was both with what had been done and said. The same evening he and a faithful servant loaded the papers into his carriage, and he wrapped himself in his furs and slept all night in it, lest any should rob him of his treasure, and the next morning, as soon as the gates were open, he set off in the Brandenburg direction, to avoid creating suspicion.

The Brandenburg senator and the burgomaster of Berlin parted far otherwise than as enemies. No ; they drank a bottle of sweet wine together, and clinked their glasses to the toast that their friendship might endure for ever. They then drank to those they felt the nearest to them, and the eyes of Johannes were moistened.

"And you have not yet even seen your daughter," said Herr Pernewitz.

"To-morrow, to-morrow I may be a father," answered Johannes ; "till now I have been but burgomaster. God be praised that I may safely send for her to-morrow !"

"She has grown tall and beautiful. May she sweeten your latter days."

“It is in the hands of God!” murmured Johannes, and his eye was turned to the ground.

“It is for him to will,” rejoined the guest, well understanding the cause of the remark; “but man has means to use, and he must use them. Good friend Rathenow, it is a bad time; but yet there is a saying—accommodate yourself to the times. It may be plainly written enough what we should do, but what we may be obliged to do is not so clearly set down. It rests with a man’s conscience, and what is right is for him to determine. Do not misunderstand me. Many know what is right, but few know what is best in place, and will turn out the best. The path of right is ever behind us, pointing to what has been. Before us, it lies like an open country, which we have never trodden, whose nearest ways we are unacquainted with, and which, therefore, we have to seek for. He who always brings before his eye the country he has left may easily go wrong. We have eyes, ears, sense, given us, to test and to prove. We have to find our way among novel circumstances. And is not each of us in such a case? Is not our whole life a journey like to this? The old proverbs, the old saws, are just like the grandfather’s coat, they cannot be fashioned for child, and child’s child. We must accommodate ourselves to new ways, though it is hard to have to learn when the foot is already weary. But all that we have to learn is not bad,—if it were, the world would be at an end.”

“Who can answer for that?” said Johannes, as they stood up, and parted with a long pressure of the hand. Their eyes rested on one another’s, but neither spake a word more.

“The right must yet remain,” said Johannes to himself, when alone. “Who can recall what has happened, and is past.”

It was afterwards said in Berlin that the private papers of the Margrave had been respected because no one would take the trouble to read them.

The next day there came a letter from Balzer Boytin to the senate, in which he declared himself their open enemy. It ran thus:—

“Know ye, burgomaster, senate, guilds, and every inhabitant of the towns of Berlin and Koeln, and all who hold citizenship among you, or land in lease, that I am your open determined enemy, and will be such to you, and your possessions inside as outside the towns,—I and all they who will be with me in my peace and war. And I will defend my honour, and that of my associates, against you the above-named, to the making good of this my declaration of enmity. Given at Mildberg, on Easter Tuesday, under my seal.

“(Signed)

BALZER BOYTIN.”

CHAPTER VIII.

No honest man would willingly find himself in the depths of the forest, the evening drawing on, and the snow-clouds driving over the face of heaven. We say so even now, though things are better than they were then. For instance, where roads meet, there are generally sign-posts, pointing with their wooden arms to the right or the left, and though what they mean be not always legible, there is generally some way of discovering it. In old times it was far otherwise in the forest. One might ride mile after mile and fall in with neither guide nor guide-post, the only road-tracks being the marks of wheels, or the tread of hoofs. The traveller took the best road of his own choosing. There was no village, no house, no forest-keeper's lodge, no smoke curled up from among the trees, and no dog barked. It was a loneliness not pleasing to the heart of man. There was scarcely even a hermit in the Mark country. Men like those, though

careful to shun their fellow-men, yet profess to hear the voice of God, who made heaven and earth, and they hear that voice in the murmuring of the brooks, the singing of the bird, and the waving of the mighty forest trees, whose harmony appeals powerfully to the heart of every man. But in these forests there were no murmuring springs, and the storm, when it bore down upon the pine-wood, miles in extent, sounded far unlike the rustling of those wings of the Almighty, which carry a blessing with them, even when they destroy. No ; it was here a sound of groaning and sighing, as if Nature's eternal doom, seeking for deliverance but not finding it. No change is there in the universal tone, but one eternal sameness, and the heart of man chills and shudders under its influence, and anxiously longs for an outlet.

And yet there is a spirit speaking in these woods, when the leafless trees point, as if benumbed, towards the sky, and in these herbless grounds, where weed alone grows rank. It is the ghost of the departed people and nations, moaning over the lands they inhabited, and which they inhabit no more. The woods echoed once with the sound of the horn, and the huntsman's merry call—the lakes and rivers with the voice of fishermen and their wives—the smoke arose from the friendly hut, and the guest, whoever it might be, was welcome. It was a land flowing with milk and honey, and the tradesman, journeying in pursuit of his calling, passed safely through the deep vistas. They exist no longer, the heavy foot of

the German trod them down. His axe demolished their idols—their dwellings he burnt with fire. He made them into slaves, or he drove them to seek refuge in unwholesome marshes. Their voice is silent, or sounds only like the scream of the nightly owl. Their look has become distrustful; their eyes are raised no longer, and the great heroes, their ancestors, are forgotten by them. Such is the mourning note which is borne by the wind over the forests. The storm is its song. Its voice asks, “Where are they who once were here?” It counts the rounded earth-mounds on the higher grounds, under which races of men are sleeping.

At that time the forest tract was long and desolate, particularly on the borders of the Mark and Lusatia. The unfruitful soil was barely scarred over with weed, and the pine trees pointed mournfully towards the sky. The exterminating hand of the Saxon had hardly pursued the unhappy Vandal as far as this; he left him the worthless marshes on the Spree, and the sand-hills, where the buckwheat could scarcely strike root. It was a fit land for the fugitive, and the Vandal language was long spoken here; even in our days there still remains a miserable remnant, cleaving to their old manners and their language. They yet remember old songs, which they sing at harvest time, or when they marry, for they are once more become gay, and have forgotten the days which are past.

The way to Saxony and Bohemia lay through these forests. They who travelled it went well provided; of inns there was scarcely one, and but

few castles or frontier towers. The towns were thinly scattered, trusting for defence to the surrounding marshes, their ditches, and high walls; and should a solitary traveller pass that way, he might well rather congratulate himself upon the perfect silence than when he heard the crushing of the brushwood or saw a shadow cross his path; at such a time he would cross himself hastily, prick his ears, and move onward cautiously. Should two happen to meet, how anxiously they looked on one another from the distance! and if they spoke, it was with well-considered words; and had they done so, and passed onward, each one might well grasp his pike firmly, and look behind him, lest the other should turn upon him, and attempt that behind his back which he had not ventured face to face. The rough crosses on the road side here and there, pointing out the place where some murder had been committed, suggested reason enough for fear. In some places might be seen a bone bleaching—not the bone of a horse, nor of a dog, nor of a wolf; or again, some such bone hanging from a tree, to tell of some assassin whom honest people had overcome and slain. In other places there were heaps of stones. It was a pious custom for each passer by to throw a stone upon the spot where some one had fallen under wicked hands, for who else would raise a monument for him?—and thus the stones accumulated into heaps, and the traveller murmured an Ave-Maria for the soul of the unfortunate, not knowing who he was, whether an enemy or a friend.

Even in the bright days of summer, under a clear heaven and a burning sun, the loneliness is still oppressive and frightful; when no breath of wind rustles amongst the pines, and they sweat out their resin globules, and the bees and wasps hum amongst the wild heath-bells, and no noise is to be heard, save the tapping of the woodpecker and thy own footstep, poor traveller, stumbling amongst the pine-fruit and broken wood, the sand hot, and thyself weary, — thou mayst well feel anxious in the Mark forests, listening whenever a breath of air stirs, or a squirrel leaps from branch to branch. Thy throat is dry, but there is no refreshing water, for if thine eye lights on a pool, it is red, and green, and yellow, circled with rushes and fern, with white insects swimming on its tantalizing mirror, and the frogs croaking forth their in-harmonious song.

If it was thus in summer, what would it be in autumn, and what in winter, when the scanty leaf-work has fallen from the trees, and the storm rages unrestrained? The clear, fresh frosty day is often a joyous time, and the forest seemed to think so too. At such times, the dark green branches of the pine clothe themselves in white, and stretch themselves in seeming majesty; but it is never thus in winter. The light of heaven is obscured by the dense snow cloud; rain and mist fall drizzling downward. At such times it is sore journeying through the forest; and when the traveller has lost his way, and the wind howls, and the snow gathers thick at his feet, and he seeks a sheltering

roof in vain,—may God have pity upon the hapless man!

Such had been the day, and the evening was drawing rapidly on, when a troop of travellers rode along in the direction of the Mark, from Saxony. Who can say where the frontier is? But they had already got far beyond it, and were now on the soil of Brandenburg, whither they were bound. But there was anxiety on their faces; they had lost their way, and were turning first to the right, then to the left, and the night was overtaking them. To hear the clinking of their swords and spurs, and to see the men armed from top to toe, one would almost wonder at their fear. There were four horses, and one of the party, evidently a knight, rode in advance, looking anxiously on all sides whenever they came to an open place. He carried a long sword at his side, a dagger might be seen gleaming at his girdle, and he wore a steel hauberk under his leather coat. His legs were half buried in buffalo boots, stouter far than even iron greaves had been. There was another, also, who seemed well protected; he was a servant of the other, and carried in his hand a short pike. With one hand he led another horse, carrying packages carefully covered over. His attention was called to this, and he was consequently not able to take notice of the road as was his master. Lastly, on the other horse, there rode a female, cloaked up in furs; this latter wanted protection rather than was able to extend it, and most anxiously did she look around. It was evident that

the horses were tired, and had all of them enough to carry; in short, they were travellers whom one would not have felt afraid of meeting, but who themselves had considerable cause of fear when they met any one.

At last, they came to an open spot, and before them there lay a broad level expanse. The wind had driven the snow together wherever there was weed to retain it, but in other places the ground was bare. There was nothing higher than brushwood; the outline of the forest was barely perceptible in the distance.

“Father, do you hear?” said the female, hastily joining the foremost of the party, who had drawn rein. She was a fair young girl, now that her features came to be seen; judging from the figure, buried in furs, one would hardly have thought so.

Her father had heard it well enough. A frightful howling issued from the marshy land, and came nearer, and the wild springing of four-footed beasts might be heard close by, whilst the snow, disturbed, scattered itself into the bushes. The horses struck out, and neighed anxiously, and, in spite of the riders, they put their noses together. Just then, a pair of black forms sprang out of the bush, and described a considerable circle round the travellers. They were wolves, and their howling was frightful.

“Let us make a noise, sir,” said the servant; “the beasts do not like the rattling of steel.”

The knight shook his head, and leaning forward, he followed the hungry beasts with his eye: “Do

not be afraid, Agnes ; they will do us no harm. See, they are afraid themselves !”

And it seemed so, for the wolves made larger and larger circuits round the group, as if afraid of the eye of the speaker, which followed their movements ; or perhaps it was the quiet of the party, which seemed to say they waited their attack. At last they dashed into the brushwood, and their howling grew more distant.

“ They will not harm us,” repeated the Ritter.

“ Oh, but they may come again ! Let Dietrich make a noise,” said the affrighted girl.

The knight shook his head : “ We need not fear the wolves ; but there are worse wolves than they are—we must not bring them upon us.”

And they rode a while further, without speaking. They were little at ease, and each kept his eyes about him, and his ears well open.

The knight, easily to be distinguished as a Markman, was on his way from Dresden. He had been to receive a legacy, and he bore the treasure with him on the pack-horse, and in the bags which hung across the other horses. The only way in those days to get hold of anything, was to do it at once, for if not, there was sure to be some one else who would do it, and it would not have been easy to get it back again ; so the knight had taken as much as he could carry, and set off home with it, for at home he had need of it. His homestead was desolate, and he had a fair daughter. We may suppose, then, that he looked anxiously

at every bush and tree, in fear of robbers ; he cared little about the wolves.

They drew rein whenever they came to an open place, and if anything looked suspicious, the knight or his servant rode on alone. The thickets which hide treachery may also be made avail of to conceal from treachery. There are always two ways of using anything—a good way and a bad way.

The girl remarked, “Zarnekow is good friends with us,—is he not, father?”

“He was,” answered the knight.

“You sheltered him once when he was pursued.”

“Hem ! hem !—that is soon forgotten ; my cousin, he of Saarmund, has spoiled his sport more than once.”

“But that was in obedience to the Mark-graf?”

“The hand that strikes is the one that causes the smart !”

“But you sent him money, and told him you were coming this way?”

“Well, but he sent me answer, that it was confounded little out of such a prize !”

“But he would not have seized it?”

“No, *he* would not ; he is of noble blood. But he has not sent me an escort, and where is he himself ? He has many people under him, but he cannot have eyes on them all ; and there are many in these tracts who are independent of him.”

“It is a bad world ! Where do all such wicked people come from ?” asked Agnes.

“ From the towns, child ; they are the nests where all the mischief is hatched. They turn all the bad ones out”—and he added, grumbling, “ the good ones they have left are not worth the devil’s fetching !”

“ But they are going to catch it now,” put in the servant, whose remarks had, till now, not been heeded by the knight, for it did not become a servant to open his mouth except when spoken to, only in the forest it might be otherwise. Men are nearer allied when the wolves begin to howl and the night to fall.

“ That is true,” answered the Ritter, “ the people of Berlin and Koeln are not banishing their bad people just now, but calling them back instead. He who has arms, and nothing to lose, may have good fighting.”

“ By my patron saint, there will be something to be got by it there !” rejoined the groom. “ What rich people there are in Berlin, and still richer in Koeln ; I have seen it with my own eyes. They will pay every man, who will take service with them, as long as the strife lasts between Balzer——”

The knight made a sign for silence, for the quick ears of the girl had called his attention to a sound which he now heard also.

“ It is only the wolves again.”

“ They won’t leave us again, sir ; having smelt us once they will not go far. If we have no water to cross, or do not soon find an inn, we shall have a whole troop of them at our heels.”

This was poor comfort. The lady cast her eyes

to the heavens, which were already densely covered by clouds threatening much snow. The knight seemed to care little about that either. He talked of nothing but robbers. "They cut a man's throat, take all he has, and are off again without any one knowing where they go to. They are worse than the wolves."

"But they say that our Mark-graf is very powerful against the robbers."

"Our Mark-graf!" grumbled the Ritter; but what he said further was not audible; his thoughts dwelt upon how things were formerly. He thought how that one knight never fell upon another, without having given him notice of feud. And he thought, too, whether or not the poor wanderer, or the tradesman travelling with his wares, was better off now than then. The robber at present would take his all, and cut his throat into the bargain for fear of his telling. Now before, the good man and true, who kept the road-side, was not one to injure the hapless traveller; and if a tradesman passed who was unwilling to pay black mail, or leave him a portion of his wares, the worst was that the man got detained awhile till he could buy himself free. And, moreover, continued Herr Bredow in his meditation, if he did get a knock on the head, and his body found its way into a ditch, it was rather an honour for the fellow, and he knew who did it for him; but, in these days, who is there to answer for the nameless thieves who cut a man's throat or smash his skull for him? It is done, and there is an end of it! Grasp the dust whirling in the

wind! It is bad management, and will tend to no good.

So thought the Ritter. The maiden's thoughts were not so very discursive, though there was a sort of meditative expression upon her face which shewed that the anxieties of the moment did not wholly possess her mind. The groom was not thinking at all, and, therefore, spoke the more, and in the circumstances, the Ritter did not seem disposed to check him.

The man had, some years before, been in the service of Balzer Boytin in Berlin, and had much to tell about his being such a strange man, whom no one could make anything of. Though not a soul had ever put confidence in him, he had always known how to make them dance to his fiddle, even those who were continually prophesying that he would get the town into some hobble, and saying that he ought to be looked after, and made to give an account of himself. It was a bad job for the town that they never made up their minds till it was too late.

“The great people in the towns, and the proud burgomasters, turned up their noses at him, and turned their backs on him when they met him; but he always knew how to get round them; and there he was whispering into their ears before they knew it, and catching them just like bullfinches when one whistles. There was nothing done soon, but he had a hand in it, till at last he got made burgomaster. Who would have thought it,—such a common man as he was?”

"But they kicked him out at last!" said the Ritter.

"That didn't do him any harm, your lordship. You'll not believe what I say, but he carries on in Barnim yonder like a lord of the land, and more, too. He had never more than a dozen servants in the town when his trade went well, but ask now how many ride behind him, and how many he has lying in the small towns round about. He rides in and out as if he was the Burg-graf, and the people would do ill to shut the gates against him, as the Berlin people did to the Mark-graf! Oh, no! when he rides in anywhere for a night's lodging, the magistracy send to know whether he is in want of anything, and what is his pleasure. All that is wanting is, that the burgomasters pull off his boots. When he was a dealer, he used sometimes to have as many as fifty horses in his stables—haven't I seen them myself?—but now the dealers from Mecklenburg and Holstein come to him, and he buys by the string. He knows when he sees a good one. They say the Mark-graf is at the back of it; but there has always been a something at the back of Balzer Boytin, only no one ever knew what it was. To look at his chests and his pockets, one would never have thought he could pay the week's wages, but let pay-day come—there they were sparkling on the board, just as if fresh from the mint."

"Yes, yes," continued the groom, after awhile; "the folk do right to flock to him. He pays just as well as the Berliners, and, for what I know,

better too. I remember, as they drove him from Berlin, and he barely escaped—oh, blessed saints, the face he made! How he did grin, with his mouth open from one ear to the other, and shake his fist, and gnash his teeth. ‘Oh, you shall pay me!’ he growled out, ‘to the last penny and farthing!’ He has partly kept his word already; he has done things that child’s child will tell of. As yet he has gone free. He holds court like a prince in Barnim. The Bernow and Straussberg people, who used to hold with the Berliners, dare not do so now.”

“A horse-dealer, such as he!” grumbled the Ritter.

“Only to think what a man may come to, that’s what I say!” continued the groom. “There was many a one in Berlin who was to do great things; many of them, to be sure, were banished, and did not come back. There was a weaver’s boy, his name was Henning Mollner. He could break a yardstick with his little finger, and when there was anything going on, he was sure to be at the head of it; he had lungs, too, to shout with, and was a fine handsome lad, and had money. Didn’t the girls look after him! Every one thought something great would come of him. Well, no one knows where he is, or anything about him, for he went into exile at the time he broke the town gate, and let in the Mark-graf. He didn’t make a good beginning, that’s why it was. Let a man begin properly, and he will succeed just like Balzer Boytin did. And that is it; every one

asks, 'If he could do it, why cannot I?' only the reason is that no one knows how to make a beginning."

"So this horse-dealer rules it in Barnim?"

"Yes, and in Lebus, too. It was only the other day he took five laden boats on the Oder, which belonged to the Schumms and the Wyns of Berlin. God knows how he gets to know when there is pillage to be made! He can do nothing in Teltow here, because Koepkin Zarnekow has too many friends. They cannot agree, the two, and it is not likely they will, for Koepkin seized a string of Balzer's horses the other day. Is it not jolly, sir, such a pair, ready to eat one another up, and both of them ready to eat up the Berlin people? Yes, and the town, too, lying as it does so right between them. Snap them up on this side, snap them up on that, they do cry out and lament; but let them alone, they are rich enough to bear it.

"I don't grudge it them!" grumbled the knight. "It is a crying shame that what they have does not belong to better people."

"It is a good thing that there are some people to make money!" continued the groom, growing more bold. "It always falls into some one's hands at last. But, after all, war is the best way of getting gain; it changes hands quick. Balzer, my master as he was then, often talked, to be sure, about the blessings of peace, but that was all well enough in the towns. He does not talk that way now. He is getting to be a rich man, and the

gentry in Barnim get their share too. It pleases them well enough. Many an ox which was driving to the towns is now pasturing on their fields, and many the swine that is now hanging in their larders. And they got it cheap. Wherever there is pillage, there is good deal dropped, for who can carry with him the whole of what he seizes? So they are very glad to receive Balzer at their castles, and they treat him well. He always pays the nobles for what he consumes, and they often send their people with him, when he makes forays upon the Berlin villages. Sometimes they go with him, and what a feasting and carousing there is when they are successful. And when one looks at it well, who is the loser by all this? If they set fire to the thatch above a peasant's head, the man may warm himself at his own fire, and should he be driven out of bed and take to the field, it is often better for him. Let him take a pike and revenge himself, in his turn, upon others. It is only in towns that they talk about peace, and yet do not preserve it; the one is ever seeking to be above the other—the patricians and the trades, and the trades and the patricians. Peace makes them rich, and the country poor; war makes the country rich, and the towns poor; so I say that war is better than peace, and the towns have bacon enough to be able to spare a good slice or two now and then.”

The conversation turned to some guests whom they had met in the inn at Luckau; they were

men whose pursuit was evidently that of arms, and who were en route for Berlin.

“ They hardly knew whether to join their worships, or to turn aside to Balzer Boytin,” said the groom ; “ but I’ll lay a wager, they help any gentleman they meet on the road. They took particular notice of our pack-horse. One wanted to lend a hand ; but I gave him a dig with my elbow, and said, ‘ Every one helps himself the best.’ It is well that they are on foot, or they would have laid on the scent.”

The thought of this made the party silent awhile. At last the knight remarked that it might have been well to have accepted the offer of escort from the knight they had met in Dobrilugk, who was going the same way, but had had to halt a short time, on his horse’s account.

The girl remarked, almost with emotion, “ Oh, father, if he were to fall into their hands ! We should not have left him to travel alone.”

Herr Gottfried laughed : “ He looked as if he was afraid,—did he not ?”

“ The gold and silver that he had with him, the rich cloths and merchandize, just what would tempt people like those.”

“ And other sort of people too,” growled the knight. “ But he had four followers, and limbs of his own to take up with half a dozen or so. A good travelling companion he was.”

“ We should have waited for him,” said the girl.

“ Well, well, perhaps we should.”

And they continued talking about this unknown

Ritter; they both seemed to be somehow interested about him. It was not a thing of every day in the Mark to see a knight whose mail was inlaid with silver, whose pockets were full of gold, and whose horses were of pure Arabian breed; one, too, on his way from Turkey, bearing a wound or two on his forehead; and as a set off for them, more than one horse's tail, and crescent, and golden chain, whilst the hide of a panther hung loosely over his shoulders. There was that, too, in his face, scorched as it had been with the eastern sun, which might well serve to gain credence for the reports which his followers spread of his marvellous deeds against the dogs of Turks, whom may God root out from the earth. They both agreed about the lustre of his blue eyes, and what they had heard him say had been a pleasure to listen to, for grave-looking as he was, he plainly knew how to be right merry at times, and that in a way which made others merry too. In short, if there had not been something more or less wonderful about him, it is hardly likely that their heads would have been so full of him, exposed as they were all the time to instant peril. Count Bredow would willingly have waited for him, only the stranger had refused to answer what was his business in the Mark; indeed, he had put on a half-comical, half-mysterious face when asked the question. Still, as it appeared from what he said, that he had been at the court of the Burg-graf Albrecht, surnamed Achilles, Herr Gottfried determined that he was going as an envoy to the Kurprince, whose court was just

then thronged with Franconian nobles. He did not like him the better for that ; indeed, he was not too much attached to Prince Frederick himself.

In the time of the first Frederick the father, the Bredows were rich—how they were now everybody might see ; still, for all that, he would not have objected to the stranger's company at a time like the present.

" They may say what they will," began the loquacious dependent ; " but I say there is something not right about that stranger knight."

" What do you say ?" asked the Count, and Agnes opened her eyes wide.

" That it is right well, and better than we think, that he and we are not on the same road."

" Perhaps it is—perhaps not, Dietrich ; but a reason why ?"

" Lame, sir, lame—not sound, sir—not the thing."

" You mean the horse."

" No, sir—he, too ; there is no good telling me, sir."

" Dietrich !" said the girl ; " what do you mean ? why, he walks as upright as a king."

" Oh yes, lady ; but not right—no, not right. I know whom I have to do with."

" Blockhead !" said the knight, angrily ; " the Counts of Ruppín themselves have not silver harness like his, in their whole armory. All the Itzenplitzers and Wedels together could not find two horses in all their stables to match the worst of his."

"Quite true, sir; I have nothing to say against the harness nor against the horses—only where has he got them? They may have been a good man's the day before yesterday. Who knows where such a one's bones may be lying? Old wives pull off their old clothes behind hedges, and behind hedges the robber puts his new ones on. Oh, yes—it is true they fit him very well; but I know whom I have to deal with."

Both father and daughter were mightily irritated.

"Blitz element, Dietrich—it is false! If that man is not a Ritter——"

"He is a bad man who says so," interrupted the girl, and it seemed as if she would have urged her father to strike down the calumniator on the spot.

"Oh, yes, lady," stammered the servant, "he may be a Ritter; but what sort of one is he?"

"He bears a mill-wheel on his escutcheon, and his crest is an eagle," said the knight; "I don't know it, but it is all right."

"Oh yes, all right; but what sort of fellows were three of his servants, those who spoke neither German, nor Polish, nor any kind of language I ever heard of? Regular cut-throats! And who knows but those fellows at Luckau were part of his band."

"His band!" cried both father and daughter.

"Dietrich," said the Count, gravely, "take heed what you are doing; mind what you say about good people and true."

"He may be a good man, sir, perhaps. Only,

by my soul, what he has is not his own getting. If he be a nobleman, he has taken what he has from some other nobleman."

"Well, and that is quite another thing. Take more care what you say. If a nobleman chooses to send his servants to the road-sides, it is not for them to be called a band. Do you hear? Zarnekow is a knight, and what he does, though I do not say he does all that is right, but he does it as it should be done. One knight never attacks another, unless they are at open enmity."

It is not pleasant to stop the current of one's thoughts, nor to keep back the expression of a thought which comes across one; so out it came from Dietrich, whether or not, though he knew it would not please his master."

"Well," he said, after a pause, "I'll bet my little finger that it is not as it should be; he will be no knight at all."

"It would serve you right to have his gilded spurs into your sides, Dietrich!"

"Yes, yes, sir—any one could do that as well as he; but I am mistaken, or I have seen his face before to-day."

"Where?"

"He has been in Berlin before now—that is plain enough. He knows the ins and outs, and he smiled quite queerly when one or another was mentioned; and the questions he asked too!"

Both father and daughter seemed now disposed to listen; the servant seemed after all to have some ground for what he was saying.

“Heaven only knows, your honour! I can't think how it was, or where it was, but seen him before I have. I know all the nobles who used to come about, for there was not one whom my master had not more or less to do with. Many a one, too, who did not like to be seen, yet used to manage to get to him to look at a horse; and I have got it—it was at Balzer's that I saw him. He is not much good—he is not, trust me.”

A most energetic oath rolled over the lips of the count, but it was caused by other matters than those in discussion. The evening was not so far advanced as to account for the darkness which began to grow around them. They had again gained an open place, and the clouds were now heavy with snow. The wind howled no longer, but the howling of the wolves was heard more plainly; for sure enough, as the servant had said, the beasts had not left the travellers' track.

“A murrain on your tongue, Dietrich, your cursed gossip has lost us the way!”

The groom opened his mouth wide enough; his chatter and his wisdom were put a stop to at once. The snow was descending in heavy flakes, and fast covering every discernible track.

“Which is the way, villain?”

They looked every way in vain, every sign of a road was lost. The white carpet already spread over everything became momentarily thicker and thicker. They themselves, riders and horses, began to assume the appearance of shapeless statues.

"You can hold your tongue, villain, now. Speak, sir; what are we to do?"

"I can't say, your lordship."

"You must say!"

"Why, sir, I say, that if there be robbers on our track, they will not find us."

"I will break every bone in your body, scoundrel, if you open your mouth again!" shouted the knight; and the groom was fain to hold his tongue.

The baron shook himself, and cleared the snow from his eyes and eyebrows, but not any thing could he discover which could indicate the road.

"Holy Virgin! they come nearer and nearer," whispered Agnes, keeping close to her father.

He had no need to ask—who? It was plain enough, and the horses sweated and hinnied with fear. It was not a couple only, it was a whole pack, and close behind them. They could hear them plunging into the snow, and jumping out again; their howling was frightful.

"They are hungry," muttered the groom.

"What are we to do, Dietrich?" asked the Ritter.

"I don't know," whimpered the servant.

"You shall know, ass—beast! What do I feed you for, and pay you for, villain?"

"Then I think, your worship, that if it was not for her ladyship with us, that, supposing we come to no house, we might make a fire, and tie the horses to a tree, and——"

A cry of fear interrupted him. "Holy Chris-

topher!" shouted the Ritter, and the groom gave his horse the spur to where the lady was. Her horse's fore feet had sunk down, and it was plain that it was ice which had given way. The knight could not rush to her assistance, for not one step to the right or the left could he persuade or force his horse to stir. It sounded hollow under its feet, as if it was on a bridge. "Now God be praised!" shouted the knight, to the astonishment of his companions. The lady's horse, which had stood still instinctively on approaching uncertain ground, had crept cautiously backwards. It was not for his daughter's safety only that the knight had given praise to God, but because the fact of the bridge being there gave him a clue to the whole country where they were.

"Now whistle and make what rattling noise you can to keep those beasts off; a mile further stands Kikhoevel."

He should have said, used to stand. It was a tower which once belonged to the Quitzows, but had been burnt down, with the cottages round it, and not restored; but still there was reason to hope that a shelter might be obtained amongst the ruins, and a roof to cover them. They were not deceived; and, frozen and hungry as they were, their hope and courage were restored.

CHAPTER IX.

HAD they been an hour or two earlier, they might have seen the castle, of which the baron spoke, from the bridge. At any rate, they could have seen its tall watch-tower, which the artillery of the Mark-graf had only shaken a little. Its roof was gone, and its coping-stones crumbled, and many of them fallen; but a tower like that is often very durable—it rocks to and fro with the storm, but it does not fall.

Thirty years ago, this tower had presented a different appearance. Proudly it had looked down upon castle wall and castle turret, and many a merry day had been seen in its walls, and many a sad one outside them; for the traveller who was not positively driven by necessity, was glad to make a circuit rather than be seen from its towers. But fire and sword had done their work on it, and what they had left the storm and wind had made a prey of; and worst of all, the spring time, for the

spring gives life again to the weed and the creeping plant. Fair to the eye may the ruin appear, when the month of May has breathed life into its fissures, and decked out its old grey stones with the young shoot and the bright green leaf; but the root bores deeper, and the foliage protects the dampness from the ray of the sun, and the root of the hazel does what the iron bolt has left undone—it makes its way beneath the stone, and the wall crumbles to its fall.

In winter its appearance was comfortless in the extreme, though a furze-bush and a sort of sign, bedaubed to represent a waggoner, hung over its narrow portal. If there had been anything written on it, there would have been none to read it, so it did not matter that there was nothing; but it told that the ruin was occupied, and that the occupant called it an inn. A melancholy inn it was.

The tower had not stood on an eminence; but the builder—who can tell when it was built, or who built it?—had chosen a place a few feet higher than the surrounding marshes, and the lower walls, built of huge masses of stone, were some five or six feet thick. Whoever it was, had no doubt driven the poor Vandals and their wretched horses alike with the whip, to the ponderous work, and considered himself a benefactor to the people about him. He had but to say so, and they were forced to believe it. The situation of the castle was more its defence than even its strong walls, for it was surrounded with swamps and marshes, and the only passable way to it was very zig-zag. A fosse had been dug

round it, which was amply supplied by water from the mosses. Once there had been a drawbridge, but the mound had been broken down, and formed now sufficient footing to cross over by. It was no longer a tower of defence, but it furnished still a sufficient shelter for the robber. It was more like a habitation for the crows than for human beings. They sat croaking upon the few remaining battlements. It seemed as if the knights of old had ceded the possession to them, and they sat there looking out for plunder.

It was just as the evening was closing in, that a man of small stature, dressed in sheepskin, might have been seen taking his way to the door, bearing a bundle of faggots on his back. He stood a moment looking at the gathering clouds, and his forbidding features contracted into a meaning grin. The scene inside, as he entered, was almost more miserable than the view outside. All kinds of filth and rubbish lay gathered about the court-yard, and swine, dogs, and cats, roamed about at liberty. The pigs took no notice of him, but the dogs barked, and sprang up at him, till he cursed them, and drove them from him. The place where once the banqueting-hall had doubtless been was now evidently a stable, for there was a noise of tramping, and a lowing of cattle. The corner under the tower was the place of abode, and the host, for it was he whom we have seen, betook him thither, and, after throwing down his load, he leant a moment upon the window-sill.

“Jirra, they must go!” he shouted to his wife, in

the Vandal tongue, and she answered him in the same. She explained it, in German patois, to the people in the chamber, if the hole deserved so good a name. The roof, stuffed here and there with straw, admitted the water from the melting snow, and a pig, snuffing its nose into everything, was now running over the naked children, now squeaking, as the mother drove it away with her roasting-spit. The best things in the room were a mighty wood fire crackling on the hearth, and the great store of bacon and sausages smoking in the gaping chimney. The smoke came back as often as it went up, and, had people been in the habit of coughing then as much as they do now, it would hardly have been possible to endure there.

There were two strangers in this chamber, apparently pedlars. They were seated on their packs, and feeding themselves off a single plate, which laid between them. Much surprised they were at the hostess's communication, for it had been their intention to stay all night, as their horses were tired.

"We will go as soon as we have had our night's rest," said one of them.

"It mustn't be so," answered the woman; "you must go now."

"Holy Christopher!" answered the pedlar, "is this what we have given you coloured ribbons for? Is there no gratitude amongst you people?"

The woman, who spoke but little German, knew enough to understand them, and, with a look full

of meaning, she answered, "That is just why you must go."

And she offered them the ribbons back again, and seemed sorry that the givers had to go away.

"Hang the ribbons!" cried the pedlar. "What must we go away for?"

"The ravens croak," answered the woman.

"Confound the crows! What are the crows to us?"

"There is much snow; much—much."

"The woman is mad! Would you drive us out into the snow?"

She shook her head to and fro, and looked at them strangely enough. Just then her husband opened the door, and, to the strangers' surprise, there he stood, with their horses already saddled: "Quick!—you must go away! My boy will shew you the road."

"Vandal dog! we can pay for our lodging."

The man grinned, and shook his head, making a sign of the cross: "You must go, good gentlemen. There is too much snow. Snow drives all the game out of the wood. They will come here to warm themselves. Eat up!" and he cast his eyes on their packs and coffers. "Quick! quick! for your own sakes!"

Though they only half knew what he meant, they still hurried to pack their goods on their horses. They perceived that they were to escape some danger or other, though they might well calculate the dangers of the night, from the snow and the wolves."

The Vandal gave his boy directions how they were to be guided the nearest way to the nearest place. The woman whispered a charm, which she said would keep them safe from the wolves. The poor pedlars had to take themselves away from their promised bed and shelter.

"Poor folks!" muttered the woman after them; but her husband bade her make haste and get the beer barrels out of the cellar, and the flagons for drinking. "In a snow like this," he said, "there will not one of them stay behind."

An hour or two later, this room, or kitchen, presented a far different appearance. A still larger fire crackled on the hearth, pans and earthenware vessels hung over the blaze, or stood beside it, and the woman was busy dipping her ladle, first into the one, then into the other. The children, small as they were, were serving the guests—their number was so great. The pig, for which there would have been no room had it lived, had been hastily killed, and its flesh was already roasting. The people had found places where they could, on the barrels, the bundles, or the blocks of stone, which stuck out from the irregularly built wall, and it would have been as warm and comfortable as could have been wished, had not the snow, melted now in greater quantities by the heat within, descended in a regular shower of rain from the roof, falling into the pots, and pans, and beer flagons. But what cared guests such as they were, for trifles like these? Surely it was not so bad as in the open forest, and it was

plain enough that the open forest was their dwelling-place.

Who would undertake to describe their aspects? Turn away disgusted from the countenance of one, and your gaze would return again to the first, for that of the second was still more coarse and revolting. And if the faces of the men with their undressed beards and scars were bad enough—good heavens, to look at the women! The men might have passed for good-looking in the comparison. Their dresses were mostly the skins of beasts, the fur turned inside, coated thick with the dirt in which they had lain, whilst their hair, matted with blood, had known a comb as little as their skins had known water. They carried knives in their girdles, and most of them had some piece of armour or other, whilst their axes and spears, rusted with blood of men and animals, laid ready at hand on every side.

Where would the appetite of a man of taste like Niclas Pernewitz have been, had he seen them tearing the flesh in pieces, and fighting with each other for the morsels! There was a laughing, too, at which the very dogs were frightened, it sounded so shrill and unearthly, and a clamour, above all, enough to bring down the building about their heads.

Their mutual confidences were plain enough to be heard by all, and recitals, enough to make the very flesh creep, were the excitements to laughter. Scarcely a moment but there was quarrel—fists

clenched, and even knives drawn. The host had not a word to put in, he was glad to go crouching about, wriggling his way amongst them as dexterously as he could, getting kicks and pushes with the elbow, notwithstanding all his pains.

There was one of them lying on the ground, who, indeed, could hardly be recognised as being a man ; he bade the landlord pull off his boots, and as he did so he gave him a push, which sent him backwards amongst the others. They hurled him against others, and it was fine fun for them to see the poor wretch bouncing about, obliged as he was to take all in good part.

“Hollo !” cried he on the ground ; “when we come to roost amongst those Berlin tun-bellies in this fashion !”

“I don’t believe it !” answered the man addressed. He was a white-faced man, with dark hair hanging lank over his hollow cheeks. To see his eyes wandering from one to the other, you would have preferred meeting the greatest ruffian amongst them all alone in the forest, than one such as he.

“Clipshears, it is true !” shouted the other ; “they have written to Koepkin. Donner wetter ! we in Berlin !”

“It is not true !” answered the tailor (for such he had once been), doggedly. “I know the gentry—the fiend fetch them all ! I shall bear in mind their favours to me. But they will not send for Koepkin—sooner the fiend himself !”

“I tell you they have sent for him! It is all up with them! Hurrah!”

“It would suit us well,” put in a third. “There is nothing more to be got here.”

“Holy saints, we’ll protect them!” shouted a fourth. “Three or four of us in every house—their cellars, their chests, and their women! They shall have cause to remember Koepkin and his good fellows. Tailor there! to tickle their fat sides till they vomit all their gold,—does it not make you feel like the devil himself for joy!”

The tailor sprang to his feet, and his eyes flashed fire as he dashed his flagon on the table—“I tell you I know the Berlin and Koeln gentry; a pestilence upon them! There is no gallows so high, but I would hang them on it! I would drive this pike of mine into their entrails, one by one, and would laugh myself mad to see them writhing at my feet! I laughed even when the bailiff branded me! But they are wise, and have good scent. They will know better than to let the fox into the hen-roost!”

“They must be worse off before they do it,” put in another. He was a man who, it might still be seen from his appearance, had been a burghess. He was older and more collected than the tailor.

“They are badly off enough!” cried many voices; and a woman’s voice was heard from the corner croaking. “They will be worse off yet!”

There was a momentary silence, and everybody looked anxiously towards the corner, for an old

woman sat there whose presence none had expected. She was scarcely visible, and her head was covered with her gipsy hood. They all knew very well who she was, and a whisper ran round.

“What!—is not she with him?”

“Hush!” whispered another; “he had her beaten the other day.”

“Red Hannah!” asked two or three with half-frightened looks, and more than one made the sign of the cross. “Koepkin beat Red Hannah!”

“It was last week when a bolt wounded his arm; he shouted like a bull. He bid her be beaten because the salve would not ease him. She must cook some more, and that is why she has come to us in the wood.”

“No, no,” said another; “I know better than that. She must obey him, the witch, because he has got the upper-hand over her, and is her master! But if he does not flog her every three years till the blood runs, the compact is out, and she would fly away.”

“A pretty story!” said more voices than one; “to keep fast with the devil for a few stripes!”

“It is the same with us; the hand withers if not stained with blood once in three years!”

“Yes, if the witch flew away from him, his hand would be withered.”

“It is all d—d nonsense!” interrupted the former speaker; “she cannot leave him. When they made their compact, she slew a virgin’s new-born child, and cooked its heart’s blood and drank it; he took the thumb of the right hand. He

wears it next to his skin, on a cord made from the entrails of a Jew, and as long as he wears it he has her fast. She may do as she likes; and if she does not get Salome to cut it off, she is his for life; and Salome will know better, for when she offered to do it two years ago, it was at Dahme, he tied her by the wrists to the bough of a tree, and had her flogged till her blood ran down about her heels."

There was a good deal of dispute about the truth of this. Salome, they said, was not what they thought; she was a fairy from Africa, and could take what shape she liked. She was not subject to Hannah, but the contrary, and they brought many proofs of it. But it was impossible to hear all they said, for they whispered in a low voice. Meanwhile, others were quarrelling loudly about the Berlin people having written to Zarnekow. One of them said—

"I have not read it, because I can't read; but squinting Wenzel heard it with his own ears, as the priest had to read the letter to Zarnekow. The sweat ran down the shaven-pate's face, and Zarnekow sat on the stump of a tree, and laughed till he roared again. Every child knows it in Mittenwald. What can Koepkin be doing in Mittenwald else, keeping friends with the authorities admitted into their councils, and we forbidden to steal a single hen inside their boundaries? The Mittenwald people are Berlin's best allies, and are going to send them assistance against Boytin, but Balzer is too many for them. Everybody knows

that it is not he, but the Mark-graf. The Mark-graf supplies him with arms and money, and lets him have his people, that is why the Berliners want help elsewhere. The other towns in the league would like to help them, only they dare not. The two towns made large offers to the Prince, and they will not get Zarnekow for nothing. They are bargaining in Mittenwald what they shall give him; it is as true as the holy blood of Wilsnack!"

A sort of fever glow coloured the pale face of the tailor, and the other (whom we have already mentioned as having been a burgess of Koeln) half drew his knife and drove it again into its case. But whilst the most of them howled for very joy in tones more like of beasts than of men, there were some who seemed little satisfied. They were of opinion that it was not good to meddle with great people's quarrels.

"He will repent it," whispered one. "Koepkin's place is in the field, not behind stone walls."

"The devil will not be trifled with!" said another. "There may be something to be earned in the dark, but in the day time one only comes in or blows."

"And we are to keep quiet?" said the first speaker. "Think of that caravan we had to let pass. That sort of thing will never do."

"If you give the little finger, you must give the hand next!"

At this moment, a wild-looking ruffian burst into the room, and seizing the host by the neck,

with a horrid imprecation he drove the unfortunate man on to his knees. "Ah, villain!" he shouted. "Comrades, this Vandal dog, this pagan beast, was going to rob us! Wait, I will sew up your throat for you!"

The robber band started up, and drew their knives: "What is it?"

"What is it? Speak, dog, villain! I will cut your tongue from your throat if you utter a false word!"

"Mary, Joseph! Oh, ye holy intercessors, I will tell all!" stammered the poor wretch. His wife stood by, trembling.

"There I go into the stable, tumbling about," continued the other, "and find four horses, none of ours. Away I creep up the ladders, and, behold, all is fast, and I hear snoring! I get hold of his lad, and take him well by the ears, and out comes the whole story. The dog has got treasures hidden—wanted to deceive us."

"I will tell all!" stammered the Vandal.

And tell he did, all he knew,—that he had admitted a knight, a lady, and one who appeared to be a servant.

"Hurrah!—they will be the same!" cried the hearers, who had listened greedily to the recital.

"Bredow and his inheritance! We have run him home!"

And the German patois, the Vandal, Polish, and other dialects, confused themselves in their ejaculations of delight.

"Mary, Joseph, St. Christopher, and St. Law-

rence!" cried the host, still on the ground; "it is a knight and his men, in iron and steel; he has axes and spears—there will be bloody heads!"

"Thine the first, lying hound!"

"Twist his neck round!"

"Holy Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Oh, ye three holy Kings, do not do it!—do not bring blood upon the house!"

"Do it not!" croaked a voice from the corner.

"Do it outside, in the wood on the heath," continued the host; "the rain will wash away blood, the wind will bleach the bones, and the birds carry them away. Blood drives gain from the house; do not take away my honest livelihood!"

A fiendish laugh was the only answer, and a dozen knives left their sheaths. They seized their axes, and one of them flung the door open, but it banged to again, bringing with it a shower of snow, which fell even as far as the very hearthstone.

"Spare, spare!" shrieked the Vandal; "the knight is a friend of Koepkin's; he has his safe conduct. You would strike against the hand which strikes for you!"

Some hesitated; but the red-bearded ruffian whom we noticed first had raised himself up. He hooked his girdle, and turned up his sleeves.

"Do not believe the vagabond!" he said; "it is a lie what he says; he has only one servant with him. We know, and not he, who are Koepkin's friends; the Vandal dog wants the treasure for himself, but

he shall not have it. I say it is a fair plunder, which Providence has sent us, and we may wait a long while before we see such another."

"I know a better one," croaked the former voice ; and Red Hannah stood tall before them. She laid a hand upon the hearth-side, and the other held a besom, as if for support, whilst the fire glowed again upon the red cloth which hung over her head.

"When the falcon sees the loach, the young carp, or the pike, basking on the water in the clear sunshine, does he dart down upon the frog ? Oh, the frog croaks, and the falcon beats his wings, and the fishes fear them at the top, and dive down. I know a clear pool, on which the sun is shining, where a thousand gold fishes are basking at the top ; keep your eyes steadily upon them, and they will be yours. They are the towns, and they call for you. Let the frog croak, and the echo will be heard everywhere round, and they will take fright and dive down, and their doors will be shut in your very faces. Have ye no desire to stick your great hands into the chests and coffers of the rich citizens ? Hearken what Hannah says—the treasures of the traveller here are but as a dry crust ! On the banks of the Spree yonder, ye will scarce know what to take first, and what ye seize ye will throw down again, for out of the houses there will be borne silver and gold. Hollo ! you Red-beard—you deaf Hyndemit !—would not ye like to repay the proud citizens ? Have ye forgot the tongs and the red iron ? Have ye forgotten the fair maidens

in the rich houses? They send for you. Will ye blunt your teeth for ever on leather and musty bread, or do ye think that they are as the doves on the house-top, and ye had better keep the sparrow which is already in your hand? Red Hannah has somewhat to tell you—give good heed! As surely as my arm is withered, and my finger crooked, so certainly are the doves yours. It is already fluttering in the string, and the string is in your captain's hand. Sharpen your knives, boys; whet your teeth, and keep your mouths closed. Ye shall rejoice, and before another moon! Ye shall rejoice, ye shall drink and riot, ye shall break and tear down! Hurrah! Zarnekow's band quartered round Saint Peter and Saint Nicholas, till the hair of child and child's child shall stand on end when their fathers tell it them! Therefore, be ye quiet here—quiet as moles, still as is the serpent who would feign to be dead, that the peasant may take him into his house. Be still, as Zarnekow has bidden ye to be—your captain and master. He knows of all, and woe to him who does aught against his command!"

There was a silence: no one stirred, and the looks of all were lowered. The storm itself seemed hushed for the moment, as if to increase the impression of what the old wife had said. When they again looked up, she was gone. She stood in the castle portal, and bound her petticoats about her, and fastened her coif faster on her head. She was looking out into the snow, as the moon, breaking partially from the clouds, lit up all around.

"Whither would you, Hannah?" asked the Vandal, who had stolen out after her.

"To Koepkin."

"They will not do it?" he said.

"They will do it," she answered.

"Mother did not see how they trembled when mother was speaking."

"The dog dances when his master stands by him with his stick, but when he looks the other way, the dog runs after the bone. They are wild beasts; when the master of the forest is away, each howls and plunders for himself."

"They are bad folk! The Red-beard is never quiet when he sees anything glisten."

"The yellow Oldenhans is worse; he envies the captain his command. He would fain be captain himself. Do you hear the crows? There will be something done here. Quick! away, that he may know it!"

And before he could speak again, she was gone. Away over the snow she went, so fast that one might think she was riding on the besom which she still carried in her hand. The Vandal crossed himself, and said an Ave-Maria.

CHAPTER X.

“DREAMS are idle fancies!” said the Nurse.

“Oh, Nurse, that was not a dream! Oh, yes, it was a dream! But when I woke up, the stars themselves seemed frozen in the sky; and it was so clear and shining!—and a cold wind came in at the window. My father lay, breathing hard, at my side; Dietrich, he laid across the door, and was snoring. Oh, I never heard a man snore so loud! The mice were nattering in the corners, the horses stamping impatiently in the stable, and outside, in the night, the wolves were howling dreadfully!”

“We hear them even here; when it freezes hard, they come into the village itself.”

“But not as they howled that night, Nurse. Nearer they came, and nearer; and, oh! such a fearful howl! I held my breath for fear.”

“That Dietrich!—to think of him sleeping!—one like him, who can never hold his tongue!”

“We were all dreadfully tired. If it had not been for that and the wolves, we should not have stopped where we did; for, oh, the sight of that castle! There was not even a staircase—we had to go up by a ladder!—and the oatmeal and water, which was all they could give us!—and that ugly man only took us in, he said, for very pity.”

“But according to what you say, he was not so very bad. He took you in unwillingly, because he expected the robber band. He did not want you to risk being murdered. There is many a one worse than him, and many a great gentleman who is meaner at heart.”

“That is what Dietrich said on the road about the stranger knight, and just see how untrue that was. Oh, that we had but waited in Dobrilugk till his horse had been better.”

“It would have made a great difference,” put in the Nurse.

“It would indeed!”

“And yet, Agnes, things happen just as they are to happen. The archangel Michael would not have appeared to you then, you know.”

Agnes coloured. “The knight would not have come by his horrid wound for our sakes, the good brave man.”

“And he would not have had to lie here on a sick bed, nor have had you for his nurse; and you would not have had the pleasure of seeing him get well again. Everything is made up in heaven, and happens accordingly. Who knows what it

was that brought him to Malchow? He has sent word to your father that he intends to eat with us to-day in the hall."

"Oh, holy mother of God!"

"Yes, child, she was with you in Kikhoewel. It was she who sent the archangel Michael—I mean him in the dream. But tell me again how it happened when you woke up."

"She did not let me sleep; there was a weight upon me, as if all our packs and boxes were upon me. I sprang up; but the fright I felt in that horrid desolate room. Oh, I cannot describe it. I would have screamed, but it came over me as if I was forced to keep quiet—as if something terrible would happen to us if I made the least noise. I looked out of the window: it seemed as if the snow had covered up all the wild goings on that we had heard. I could not take my eyes away, though I was bitterly cold. Everything below was quiet; the dogs whined in their sleep, and the horses now and then seemed to sob out. It was still in the room where the noise had come from; there was no light, only a spark flew now and then from the chimney. But the crows overhead were not asleep; they were balancing themselves on the tops of the building, and beating their wings, and twisting back their throats, as if they knew what was going to happen. Just then, I saw a whole pack of wolves spring past; they did not howl, but——"

"Don't torment yourself, Agnes. When evil

spirits are about us, the best way is to make the sign of the cross and keep still."

"Then I laid me down, and covered myself with everything I could find, and buried my head in the straw. It was not right—I should not have given way to fear."

"You were tired and weak. Man can do no more than there is power given him to do."

"But I might have awoke my father."

"He was awake when the time came. The blessed saints sent you sound sleep, and the dream as well."

"Oh, yes, Nurse; but the awaking. I was still asleep, even after I had sprung up, and the doors were cracking, and swords and knives gleaming, and there was whistling and shouting; it was just what I had seen in the dream. Two had got hold of me. Dietrich was swinging his axe about him like a flail."

"He is a brave fellow," said the Nurse, "and your father will provide for him as long as he lives."

"My father had struck down one—two were staggering wounded; but just then he stumbled, and fell backwards over. 'Fear not, father,' I cried, 'the archangel Michael is come!'"

"You spoke in a dream; but it just happened as you said."

"No, it was not a dream, nurse. I saw the dragon under him, with its red bristles, just as it had been in my dream, with a mouth from ear to

ear, and teeth grinning like a wolf's. 'He wont harm us, father,' I cried; 'the archangel Michael is upon him!'

"And he stood stock still. What wonders God can work by the instrumentality of a weak girl."

"Where the dragon is, the angel must be there too."

"And he came."

"No; he stood there nobody knew how. He came in at the window; the first sunlight was just breaking, and his harness glittered golden, and his long sword flamed just like the sword of the cherubims in the Cloister church."

The Nurse, superstitious as she was, could not forbear smiling, for the knight had not entered by the window, but by the door, having already struck down three of the assailants.

"Oh, Nurse, the golden sunshine dyed the flaming sword, and the long fair hair, hanging over his armour, just as it is in pictures. And down went the red-bearded ugly dragon before a single blow of his sword, and writhed about the floor just like a dragon, and the golden knight stood with his foot upon him, and my father was saved, and——"

"And you fell down at his feet."

"Did he not come in the shape of an angel?"

"Well, well, child! But Michael is quite another sort of angel; he is a great angel—an archangel. He never would come to interpose unless when the fiend himself might be going to break loose from his chain. If he had to meddle with every

robber band—oh, it would be too much to require of him !”

“ I don’t know why angels should not come down about little matters—but it was no little matter to us. And why did he appear to me in a dream ? There was a halo about his head.”

“ But the angel who appeared to you in the dream was just such another as—the knight in Dobrilugk.”

Agnes sank her head.

“ Tell me, what did the archangel Michael wear above his armour when he appeared to you in the dream ?”

“ A panther’s skin.”

“ See now, child : the archangel Michael—he who appears to holy martyrs, and good bishops and painters—he has wings on his shoulders, and never a panther’s skin. You had the knight of Dobrilugk in your head, him with the panther’s skin. You were thinking about him, and so you saw him in your sleep.”

“ But I have heard say, that when angels come down to men, they often choose the shape of good, glorious men, that we may not fear them, but feel inclined towards them from the first.”

“ That is all true, Agnes ; but who knows this stranger, what he is and who he is ?”

“ Good heavens, Nurse ! the knight who saved my father’s life and my life : what would have become of me ? And fighting like a giant, and after he had stretched nine of the robbers on the ground, and the others had taken to flight, a cowardly

ruffian to shoot him from behind with a cross-bow. Oh, it was shocking ! Such a knight, and not to know who one like him is—there is none so noble in this whole land.”

“ Well, but it was not an angel, then. A bolt could not have wounded an angel.”

“ Oh no, Nurse ; and I don’t think it was an angel !”

“ And an angel could not have been so heavy to carry as the servants said he was when they brought him here.”

“ But if good angels had not been with him, he would have bled and died on the road. A wound like that in the winter time !”

“ The Castellan says he drank very fairly considering, yesterday.”

“ He is a Ritter.”

“ And the maid heard him swearing because they brought him sour wine.”

“ And did he not do right ? To give bad wine to a Ritter like him—he who deserves the best. I am glad you told me. I will go into the cellar myself, and draw the best for him. Servants are never to be trusted.”

“ They say he is very particular, that he must have been spoiled ; your cousins say the same.”

“ The awkward brutes ! the very stairs are ready to break when they come down them, and they cannot come into a door without running against both the posts. How do they know how to judge of a gentle knight ? To hear him talk, and then to see how he sat in his arm-chair and received

visitors,—he looked like the Lord of Ruppín, and as if they were his vassals. He is richer, I dare say, than even the Ruppíns."

"Well, well, gold and silver, if that were all, he may be. Well, God and the holy saints will order every thing for the best."

"Dear Nurse, what do you mean?"

"Nothing, Agnes. The gold is real, and the silver too; and Dietrich, the groom, is a stupid fellow, and he cannot have stolen it, for it fits him as if it were cast upon him. But how it all happens, and how he came by it——. The evil one steals about every way, and he often seduces poor mortals away with gold, and always just where one does not look for it. We do not even know his name yet, nor anything at all about where he comes from. Do you know, there is something comes over me when he smiles so ironically; and yet he must be a Christian knight, Agnes, for he makes the sign of the cross just as we all do. But it is most curious how he should happen to arrive at the tower, as if dropped from the clouds."

"It is quite simple, Nurse. He was going the same way that we were."

"Many things appear simple, Agnes; but one easily gets wrong in a snow-storm, particularly when a stranger to the country. How did he just happen to follow your track exactly through the wind and snow?"

"Some one must have shewn him the way."

"Yes; but who was this some one? There is a some one who meets us where cross-roads meet

who would be glad to shew us the way, but we should not let him."

"He spoke of an old woman."

"Yes, yes, we know who these old women are. Sometimes they ride on a besom, sometimes they are lame of a leg. What could an old woman have to do out on a night like that in the dark? The prince of darkness lights them, to be sure, that they may get hold of the right person. Oh, child, child! suppose he should limp too."

Agnes had not listened very attentively: she was standing at the window, and just now she cried out, "There he is, Nurse!—he is not at all lame now!"

It is natural to suppose that the wounded guest was a constant subject for conversation in the castle; every one had their own opinion. They were not over supplied with means of diversion. Frequent visits were not to be made in winter, when the snow was lying ankle deep; and empty barrels, and a lean larder, were not great temptations to guests. The Baron did not conceive that he was entertaining the archangel Michael; nor, on the other hand, did he consider him immediately delegated by the foul fiend; but he was certainly curious enough to know who he really was. It was his custom to go into his guest's room when he was asleep, and gaze upon his splendid armour and Turkish weapons. He would turn the silver crescent over and over, and the shield bearing an inscription in Arabic, and stroke down the velvet gold-embroidered mantle, with

such internal satisfaction, that the very wrinkles in his forehead smoothed themselves out. Then there were the spurs, too, of solid gold, and the heavy chain which the Emperor himself had hung round his guest's neck, and the coffers, which were locked, to be sure, but were very heavy. Each time, after an inspection of these things, the Baron was more and more convinced of the worth of the Ritter, to whom his daughter and he owed their lives; and if Dietrich ever tried to put in a word, he was soon silenced. He was so content, that he would hardly have chosen that the Ritter should really turn out to be the archangel Michael, instead of what he appeared to be, a good knight; though we may conceive what an honour it would have been to a Ritter in the Brandenburg marshes to have entertained an angelic guest.

The roof of the castle was in a sorry condition. It did not leak only, the water came through boldly; but whenever it became too bad, the Baron sent a servant on to the roof with a handful of straw: "It will do yet," he was in the habit of saying. The stranger, who took interest in seeing what was going on, now that he was able to go out, caught his entertainer, one day, busy with a servant, sweeping away the snow in the yard. Herr Gottfried coloured, and stammered somewhat, as he laid down his besom; but the stranger laughed, and set to the work himself, as if he had been used to it all his life. So they all three went to work, and made the court-yard look more tidy than it had ever looked before.

“We had better times once!” said Herr Gottfried, with a sigh, leading the way through his stables and out-houses.

“And expect that they will be better again,” said the guest, smiling.

“Heaven only knows!—I do not believe they will!” answered the Baron, pleased by his guest’s remark. “We are fast going down the hill; do what we can, we cannot keep our ground. Look at these walls! My father did not give them the trouble to bombard them anno ’12. When he saw how it went with Havelland, and that Plauen could not stand, he surrendered at the first call; he was a man of peace. What good has it done? The place now is tumbling down of itself. I propped the walls up with the strongest oak-trees I could find in the forest, and just see how they hang over towards the fosse! It is a nice business to have to begin propping walls on the outside; an enemy would have nothing to do but saw the props through, and there is the castle for him, and moreover, the ditch filled up! He wants neither ladder nor rubbish to make a dam with.”

“The strongest walls are of no avail against artillery.”

“It is all going down hill!” continued the host; “I do not mean to say that this castle was ever like Plauen, or the great castles in the empire where the nobles live, built, as they say they are, on rocks and mountains. But it was well enough, as I can remember it when I was a boy. To see the setting sun shining on the twelve windows, one

would wonder what there was behind them all. Yes, our family were great people then; they had their word to put in at the diets, and they were not always the worst words that were spoken there; and there were good men amongst us too, when they came to be tried. My great-uncle was governor round about here, and the times were not worse then than they are now."

A very equivocal expression of assent from his guest somewhat checked the narrator.

"I mean for the nobility. Donner wetter!—when a good family or two held together, they acquired honour and credit, and their poorest cousin came in for a share of it; but how is it now? All at cross purposes; every one goes his own way. Some are stupid, and shut themselves up behind their own walls; others play the courtier, and dangle about the courts of the burg-grafs. Instead of looking after their family interests, each one looks out for a post for himself, or a rag of honour, as if a prince can confer nobility on those who have not got it in their blood!"

He looked at his guest somewhat mistrustfully: "You," he said, "are perhaps of the contrary opinion?"

The stranger laughed, as he laid his hand on his sword-hilt: "In my opinion, this confers nobility!"

"You are the man for me; but where is it to be got now? If an honest man wants to get to know how much his bones can go through—murder! he gets written about, and posted and placarded!"

They accuse him, and summon him. I tell you, good sir, the Hohenzollers have done this country no good. Everything new—language, manners, rights, and agreements! This new stuff is enough to choke anybody.”

Herr Gottfried drew a long inspiration: “What could beset them to begin? Poking into everything, rooting and grubbing, planning and scheming! And what has come of it all? Nothing that is good. The Luxembourg princes, who were here before them, let things take their own course; the Bavarians, they say, did the same. Why should not these? Why do they want to make alterations in everything?”

“They say in the empire, that what went on in this country was dreadful,” remarked the guest.

“Good Heavens! and if it was! At any rate, it did go on. If there was a hole in the road, people knew it, and could go round. But these Nürnberg people want everything to go straight, and where father leaves off, son begins.”

“They are much esteemed in the empire for their courage, perseverance, and cool calculation.”

“Be it so—be it so! And well it is to be bold and determined against the Turks and heathens, as you have been, good sir; but not against Christian knights and ancient nobility. Good heavens! how they serve us! They plague and torment us as if we were not of their blood—pure, noble blood! Before times, there would be one house at the top, perhaps, as the Quitzows were, and the rest forced to submit. It was not

as it should be ; but still there was a way left—one could make a bargain with them. But how can any one rise above the rest in these days, without keeping the light from the princes ? They attend to the registration as not even Charles the Fourth did, who had the census taken, and made every one give in what he did and what he had. Is that the way to treat the Ritterhood ? And they remind us, too, every minute, that our lands are not our own, but only held as fiefs. The Luxemburgers never presumed to do so, nor yet the Bavarians. Free people we were, and——”

“Had got to be !” interrupted the guest ; “and owing to times of confusion and anarchy,—so I heard them say in the Imperial Chancery. In former times, all the nobles in the Mark were only vassals !”

“But what sort of vassals ?” asked the baron, hastily. “Our fathers were clad in steel and iron from morning to night. They had their work daily with the Vandals or restless neighbours. They might be vassals of their Princes, but they were their companions as well. The Princes knew their dependence, and kept friends with those about them. At last, the old line of princes was extinct, but not so the nobles. The many had made the land what it was, and their blood had tilled the same ground ; so whose heritage should it have been when the ruler dies childless ? Why, theirs who fought for it, and bled for it ; therefore it passed to the band of the nobility. The Bavarians let it be so, and so did the Luxemburgers,

but just now it is all to be altered again. The emperor and states, who never cared about us as long as things went badly with us, must now needs send as Burg-grafs to do with us just as they please, as if all that was ours is theirs again."

"Well, they have got possession."

"It is God's pity; we should have gone on else so peaceably."

"They have curious ideas in the empire; the Princes think that——"

"That is just the mischief, good sir—people thinking and princes thinking. They might find something better to do. They pay councillors who do nothing but jabber nonsense in their ears. If things had stopped where they were, the rich would have remained rich, and the poor poor. If any one had a quarrel he was at liberty to fight it out; there needed no third person to interfere. But now, what with their confounded thinkings and council-takings, the people who were rich are becoming poor, and the poor people rich. Is there any sense in that? And yet they talk so much about the good order they are bringing things into. The best sense is not to meddle in another man's business. But what do these Nürnbergers do? Topsy-turvy everything. They put in a word everywhere. First with the nobility. They first take our fiefs away, because we stand up in their defence—in defence of our rights. Then they want to have a look into our halls and kitchens, to see how much we drink and pray. They are founding a new order to give us a polish.

It will go hard with them who will not let themselves be polished. Next, they are going to set to work with their spoiled children, the towns. I care little about them. The more blows on either side the better. I suppose they will come amongst our serfs next, and see how much or how little they work for us. Well, well ! then they must have a peep at the priests. Much good may it do them. I tell you, sir, they want to make us into a Nürnberg watch, where one wheel works into another, and all goes tick-tack, just the same from week's end to week's end, and we are to be wound up and go just as long as they like. What did God make us for ? Why, that each of us should just go as far, and no further than each of us can go of himself. But what they want is to turn us about and help us along just according to their fashion. It is a sin and a shame."

And, to all appearance, the good baron carried out, by his conduct, his own proposition—viz., that no one should meddle in another person's affairs, for he took no notice of the many pleasure parties undertaken daily by the stranger and his daughter, or the gallant sayings and repartees which passed between them in the hall. The lady was delighted with his company, and hardly knew how to pass the time in his absence. And just so it was with the knight, who, though fond of the chase, still seemed to think that the hours went slowly when he accompanied the baron on his excursions. There were many excuses made as to the want of amusement, but it was only talk,

for the young folks were as happy as could be, and so was the baron himself, as he sat looking on and listening. He thought to himself, "She is my only child, and as noble and good as ever a lady in the land. It would be a pity if any of her cousins got her. They are good lads, only——" and there he stopped. But when he cast an eye over the mouldering walls and failing roofs of his father's dwelling, and bethought him of the heavy coffers in his guest's chamber, he might well think, "This old castle of mine might well be built up again, and be a good dowry for my Agnes." For from what he gathered from their conversations, his guest had possessions somewhere in the country, if he had not sold them.

One day they had a wolf-hunt ; the weather was most propitious. The lady's heart beat highly as she followed the horsemen with her eyes as they rode on, clad in buffalo hides from head to foot, bearing short spears in their hands and axes at their saddle-bows, for one of them turned back now and again to wave to her a greeting. About his neck hung a blue band, her gift to him, and a cross of yew-tree wood, which was a charm against bites of animals—not that her heart beat very anxiously lest a wolf should injure him—for even a lady of those days might well, without much anxiety, see a lover pursue more dangerous sport than wolf-hunting without a charm. But still the spinning would not go on at all, the thread broke every moment, and the wheel was laid aside. She went and fetched a leather case from her wardrobe,

and surveyed the glittering necklace which it contained.

"Oh, Nurse, Nurse!" she said, "it seems to me as if I ought not to take these."

"Nonsense, child,—why not?"

"Oh, it is so costly and beautiful, and one does not know ——"

"What is it one does not know?"

"Where he got it from." It fell from the girl's lips, but she started and turned pale at the thought.

"You should not think of that, Agnes—so good and noble a knight! Where else could he get it but in honourable war! And if not so, he has bought it afterwards with his plunder. Do not believe what evil tongues whisper; the best people are just the most talked about. I will swear that this one, at least, is the child of noble parents, and true and good, only a little wilful; but he is no worse for that. Would you like to have a knight for a husband whom others might lead by the nose?"

"Oh, who ever thought about that?"

"I think about it, and your father thinks about it, and the stranger he thinks about it. Whether you think about it or not, I do not know."

"Oh, Nurse, dear Nurse, I feel so frightened!"

"Never mind, it will all come right. Your father is going to ask him to-day where he comes from——. Never you fear, he is neither the archangel Michael nor any bad spirit sent into the world. See, look at this clasp for my girdle which

he gave me, it is pure heavy gold. Witches' gold disappears in the mornings. No, no; he is a true man. Well, and what now, little lady? What do you think now? Oh, ye eleven thousand virgins, how he will deck out his bride! What is the matter? What do you want at the window?"

"There is something coming, Nurse."

"It is a noise, indeed; they cannot be coming back!"

"Oh, my cousins!" cried Agnes. And there they were; they made as much noise as if a dozen iron-shod boots were stumbling up the stairs.

"I wish they had stayed away!" grumbled the Nurse; and Agnes's face again turned pale, for the words coming from below, which were plainly to be heard, were not likely to be pleasing to lady's ear; for the shout they greeted groom and domestic with, was — "War! Hurrah! there is going to be war!"

But our first business is with the wolf-hunt, which was as merry and as bloody as wolf-hunts generally are. Four wolves had been killed, and one of them by the stranger alone. But these sort of amusements were not so uncommon as to deserve being chronicled, and the chronicles would have said nothing more than that the wolves were killed, and three peasants torn. Of course, then, all were well satisfied with the sport, and took themselves home, bearing the wolves on biers in the van, blowing their horns merrily, and singing and laughing. The wounded peasants were also not allowed to remain in the forest. Some branches

of trees were cut down, upon which two of them were carried, the other was able to walk.

The younger knight amused them all as they went homeward, with accounts of how the chase was carried on in other countries. But they would scarcely believe what he told them—viz., that they were about making quite small fire-arms, which were to be loaded as usual with powder and ball, but small enough to be carried by one man, and fired off when rested upon a staff, which would stand upon the ground. By such means one would be able to shoot at men, the same as with the cross-bow, and one might use them in hunting animals.

The many shook their heads, and would not believe it, and they asked, "What good would it do?" The stranger said, "If a man can shoot down a ravenous beast at a distance by such means, there will be no fear of the peasants getting torn."

This satisfied them still less, and Herr Gottfried said to his guest, as they rode onward in advance, "It would not please me to see beasts brought down at a distance, for where would be the pleasure of the chase? And just so as regards war; for if I prevail against any enemy at a distance from him, war will no longer be a thing for men, but for women."

The knight answered that many others had expressed the same opinion. But there was no help for it, for they were making such things as those in every town, and just in as great numbers as

they used before to make swords and lances. This statement drew a heavy imprecation from the baron against the towns, as being the cause of all the evils that had befallen both the land and the nobility. "Those devils in Berlin have got two heavy pieces," he said. "How can a good knight contend against such weapons, and which of us can afford to have them ourselves?"

The conversation continued about the carrying on of war, and how that, on the whole, it was now far otherwise than it was when the nobles and the towns had been at variance before. "War, carried on with fire-arms," said the stranger, "is sure to prove what a man is really worth. The little man can out-do the tall man, and himself become great. It does not matter whether a man be taller and stronger than another, but whether he be cleverer and more able to seize, and profit by opportunities."

"Whether he be of good blood," put in the baron.

"All are of good blood in war who understand the best how to cripple an enemy."

"But the nobles are the only ones who know that, because their fathers and fathers' fathers were born to be knights."

The stranger laughed: "There have men become generals, sir, who, if they looked for their ancestors' pedigree, would find it in the beggar's wallet."

"No one can have any respect for a low-born man."

“They get it, notwithstanding. No one could command without having gained that; at present there are many in the Imperial army who lead on to the foe, and would be followed through the fire by their people, who were yet only burgess-born. To be sure, the old families do not much like it; but the Emperor, who will have his way, is determined to have good officers.”

“Anything is right and good against the Turks,” murmured the Baron; “and in the Litany, plague and poverty go side by side. I have heard,” he continued, after a pause, “of generals like those in the times of the Bavarians. There was one, I think, called Schweppermann. I cannot understand how a Ritter can serve under a man who is not one; they who wear the spurs have the rule.”

“Well, but the Emperor gives them spurs.”

“A burgess’ son? Impossible!

“Makes him kneel before him, and dubs him knight. Then he gives him a coat-of-arms, and creates him a nobleman.”

“How!—by the three holy Kings! can a man make a nobleman out of one who is not a nobleman? Can one make a cat into a dog? or, if you thresh rye, does wheat come out?”

“The Emperor does it.”

“The Emperor!” grumbled the younker; “the Emperor is the Emperor, and not a wizard! Could he make me into a tanner or a weaver?”

“I cannot tell, noble sir.”

“The world is getting queerer and queerer. To hear tell of such things as that! But I should just

like to see a nobleman of the Emperor's making—one who was not so before."

"Then look at me, and here you see one!"—and the stranger laughed out, "I am one of the Emperor's make; for, before that, I was the son of a Berlin burgess!"

The poor Baron was so disconcerted at this, that he could not reply, but stared as if he had seen a spirit; indeed, he had almost made the sign of the cross. But the guest seemed to be in a merrier mood than ever, and told him not to be alarmed, for the burgess blood which he had possessed formerly had been all spilt in the war with the Turks, and as for his skin, it had been all cut away by their scimitars, and the Berlin people would never know him again, inasmuch as he went away with a white skin, but was returning with a brown one. The Baron had, however, nothing to say, and he looked like a man palsied, he rode so still and timidly alongside his guest; and the more embarrassed he appeared, the more improbable to him were the recitals of his companion,—of his dining with the Emperor, of how the Emperor drank to him, of how the Princesses and their ladies wove garlands for him, and danced with him.

The youngster did not know at all what to think, and it seemed better to him not to think at all. As they approached the castle, an unexpected noise greeted their ears—a sound of men, horses, and dogs. There was a bustling in and out; the armour-room had been opened, and a whole heap of har-

nesses, greaves, and horse-gear lay in the courtyard.

“The lads are there! In the name of the devil!—in the name of the three holy Kings!—what does this mean?”

“War!” shouted Fritz, from a window.

“Gird thyself, cousin Goetz!” shouted Erich; “we are going to work!”

“Boys, what is it?”

“Hurrah!” they shouted; “our horses are going to drink wine!—Pestilence and war!—Only war, cousin—out with your band! A hunt—a merry hunt!”

“Whom are you going to hunt?”

“Whom?”—and they all laughed; and Wilkin, who was dancing for joy amongst the armour, and first putting one helmet on, and then another, he shouted—

“Whom are we going to hunt? The cloth-hecklers, the yard-stick Ritters, the tinkers, linen-weavers, sack and pack, cat and mouse! Hurrah! it is all up with them!”

“Are you mad?” asked the Baron; for it was evident that they had made free with his cellar.

“Only glad! This besom is my colour!” shouted Fritz; “I am going to sweep amongst them!”

“Amongst whom, you wild mad-caps?”

“The Berlin folks!”

“The Koelnern!”

“Take heed they do not blow you away; they have got two cannon!”

“The Mark-graf has nine.”

“The Mark-graf?” asked the Baron, surprised.

“Long life to the Mark-graf and all good knights!”

“The Mark-graf taking the field?”

“Against the towns!” shouted Wilkin—and he literally threw himself about the old man’s neck. “Hurrah!—is not that a glorious treat? He is blowing the Rogue’s March! Oh, the villains, we will hunt them!”

By this time, Agnes and her nurse had descended.

“Father, you must go to the war! The Mark-graf has sent; all his vassals are——”

But the young men’s shouts drowned her voice: “We shall storm their gates! We shall raze their walls! He has renounced them! He has accused them before the states!”

“An accusation on paper, as thick as your fist! They will have to digest it!”

“He is going to break down their bridges, to take away their duties, their right of bond and staple, their senate-house, and their Roland! He is going to grind them up altogether! He will take Roland’s sword away, and be their Roland himself!”

All this went pattering into father Bredow’s ears. It was altogether too much for once—he could not take it in; so they had to tell it him all again, in the hall, as he sat there over a goblet of spiced wine, and they all talked at once—Agnes and her nurse having their say too. He sat for a time

almost stupified, his eyes staring, and his hands on his knees. At last, a smile perked up his face, and he half whispered, "I wish the towns joy of it!"

"But"—and he held his hand to his mouth—"the Ritter?"

"Oh, father!" said Agnes, and her head dropped. The young men laughed, and the nurse clasped her hands.

"He is no Ritter!"

"Yes, he is a Ritter," answered Herr Bredow, only——"

But there was a noise in the court-yard, and a jingling of spurs. The stranger's horses waited there, and they were being loaded with sack and pack, and the Ritter himself stalked into the hall, the feather in his helmet touching the ceiling, and compelling him to bend down a little. It was a pleasure to see such a man, though not easy to regard him without envy.

"Only I am a burgess' son, Herr Bredow, you were about to say. Such I am; and though the Emperor has made me into the Knight of the Eagle, I am still, and have ever been the same Henning, who left Berlin, and not spoiled, as you soon shall see. You are right, good sir—a mouse cannot be made into a cat, and a hen should not fly over the wall. You are called for by the Markgraf, I by the burgesses; and if not called, I shall be there the same; for he is a false man who deserts his companions when in danger."

"You are going——"

"To Berlin, just as you are going to Spandow. They are not far from each other, it is a pity that our way does not lie together. God be with you, noble sir! It is good of you to give me your hand; honest people may still be friends, though they meet on different sides—it is so often."

"It is so, answered the Baron, not altogether without emotion; and he filled his goblet, and drank to his guest—"To your well-being, Herr Henning, of the Eagle!"

Henning lifted the cup, and drank to the daughter of the house: "To you, fair lady!—and forgive me that I am not other than God has made me. If you do so, then, in sign, keep that for my sake." He said this, as, on stooping to kiss her forehead, he saw the necklace in her hand, which she was about to return; and he whispered, "There is no witchery about it, save that which it embraces; but still it is a charm against betrayal—and, by God, let no one betray you!"

He gave his hand to the young men: "I am sorry, sirs," he said, "that I cannot make your acquaintance now; but we can wait awhile—we can make it up before the walls of Berlin!"

The stranger had gone before another word was uttered. At last, the Baron, after scratching his head a moment, said, "As I say, things go on queerly, and all owing to these new-fangled ways!"

The lady was not heard to speak again that day, and her eyes were seen red, as if from weeping. Dietrich, the groom, cleansed the room which the guest had occupied, as if it had been tenanted by

the plague. At bed-time, the nurse remarked devoutly to her mistress, "The Lord be praised, and all the holy saints, that he has turned this away from falling on this house! Only think, child!—but it is so dreadful that one can hardly think of it! —he was a silk-weaver's 'prentice!"

CHAPTER XI.

"It is bad, and worse than bad!" Thus spake Herr Johannes Rathenow, as he descended the senate-house stairs, leaning on Peter Brakow.

"There is a good deal that is bad, but this is not the worst of bad things."

"It is driving out the devils by the aid of Beelzebub, who is the prince of devils."

"But, by all the saints, whom else could we send to? Not one of the towns, except Mittenwald, has written to us. Have we a chance of standing even against Balzer, with only Mittenwald to help us? and against the Mark-graf, who is numbering his vassals throughout the Mark? Had a prince, even one single nobleman, answered our call; but we stand alone, there was nothing for us left."

"Except our right; and union amongst ourselves, the towns, the patricians, and tradesfolk. Is not that something? It is much, much, Herr Peter Brakow."

“ We could do much, but we can do little. We cannot go as far even as Pankow ; all our villages would be beset by the Mark-graf’s men ; we should perish from hunger.”

“ And Koepkin and his bands will come to eat up the little we have in our granaries.”

“ They know how to get more.”

“ From whence ? From the villages, and we bring misery upon misery on our heads ; we bring curses upon us, and ridicule, and contempt more than all.”

“ To be sure,” rejoined Brakow, “ if we could have done without Zarnekow, it would have been better. I like him as little as you do. But where is there another who has a party such as he has, and is willing to help us ? And as madly brave, too, as an ox that has been struck ; and more than that, Boytin’s sworn enemy, and one who cannot betray us, for the Mark-graf has sworn he will hang him wherever he catches him.”

“ To have a friend in a wretch like he is, with a band of villains who have but escaped the gallows ! Holy St. Nicholas ! such as he the sharer of our righteous cause ! It is enough to turn to evil that which is good. How can we offer prayers in our churches ? We shall need to be ashamed of seeing our own faces,—and the goings on there will be in the towns ! The shops will have to be kept close, double locks and bolts put on the doors, and an honest woman will not be able to shew her face in the streets. The passer to and fro will have to keep a hand on his pockets. Do not tell me that

they will be content with quarters in the suburbs ; that they will lodge where you choose ; that they will be your servants ; your masters they will be. Bah, bah ! Herr Brakow, it is done—I know it is too late—I am outvoted, and have been outvoted long. I saw that you only appeared to yield to me, that you might do it behind the old man's back. I was silent ; for why should I damp your courage ? But to you I may say it—you have sent for a helper, and he will prove your destroyer ; that which should be our success will be our fall, and, moreover, a disgraceful fall."

" May God shield us from it !" said Brakow, as they went down the street. " You look at the dark side of everything, dear sir."

" It is a family failing ; it is what I was taught to do."

" But still, now that our families make common cause," said Brakow, " surely better things will come. The joy which is the longest in returning to a house remains there the longest."

" Does that which brings power and riches—does that always bring joy ?" rejoined Herr Rathenow.

" Remember now the quarrel between my wife Eva and your daughter. I can tell you Eva makes the best of wives. A man who knows how to manage need not fear having the worst of wives. Eva was never ill-disposed ; but now she is as mild and good as ever a one, and I promise you she shall meet her sister-in-law as she should do ; and just so you should not be anxious about

Melchior. He is not bad at heart, and the bad that there is about him will soon be rectified by a good and sensible wife like Elizabeth. You will see he will be a son-in-law to be proud of, and there will be such a marriage as will outface the envious. Our fiddlers, and drummers, and trumpeters will make a noise to be heard in Spandow by the Mark-graf. What need we care for such as he?"

Herr Johannes shook his head. It seemed far from right that the burghers should be marrying and rejoicing at a time when the town was in jeopardy, and the foe before its walls; but it was determined on, and there was no help for it. The burgesses would not have been pleased either, for the fact of their being in trouble made them anxious to have cause for mirth. Herr Brakow advised Johannes to betake himself home before the streets became crowded, for it was near the time when his brother-in-law was about to pay his visit. He smiled as he said it, for he knew what his errand was.

And so it was; for Rathenow had hardly gained his house, when sounds of merry music might be heard approaching, and his daughter met him, saying, low down, "He is coming, father!" When they got to the window there was enough to be seen. It was the day of the pot-market in the square of St. Nicholas, and its frequenters had to-day spread out their wares with greater care than usual, building up their wares in all sorts of strange combinations. It was a pretty sight to

see, for the goods were ornamented with ribbons and garlands. One might well inquire where the buyers were to come from at a time like this.

“It is a mark of respect to you,” whispered the father to the daughter, for the pot-people looked up smiling to the windows of the house. The girl sighed.

But the noise came nearer—merry sounds of fiddles and blasts of trumpets—and already the first horsemen were turning round the corner, and the cry was, “Make way—make way!” and “Long life to Herr Melchior!” “Give place to the honourable Herren Schumms!” They came with a great train of friends—the Brakows were there, the Hoppenrades, the Garnekosers, and both the brothers Wyls, all gaily apparelled, bearing bunches of flowers on their breasts. It was curious to see with what difficulty some of them sat their horses; but of all the garlands, the one borne by Melchior was far the largest—it was at least a foot high, consisting of ranunculuses, tulips, and large lilies; and his whole dress was such as a duke might have worn on a gala day. His jerkin was of white satin, embroidered with gold; and his breeches of the same, only slashed from top to bottom, and each slash full of large red roses. His shoes, too, were of white satin, but so ornamented that the people wondered, for he had large feet at all times. His hands, too, were none of the smallest, for he was a large-boned man, only somewhat clumsy; and he was one who always would lend a hand, though he had no occasion, when there were any barrels to

be rolled about or loaded into the boats. His hands were consequently red and hard, and large enough to span round a common-sized plate. His white silk gloves, though made on purpose for him, would not fit properly, and, indeed, had burst in many places. What had silk to do on hands like his? The young man's face was also blooming red, and more extended in the breadth than in the length: his beard was light, and his eyes—there was not another pair like them in Koeln, they were so large.

In proportion to the size and weight of the rider, was the horse, and its trappings and furniture were also of the most costly description. He rode slowly, for the horse kept making awkward caracoles, for every now and then it lost a shoe. But, though blood flowed from the beast's feet, yet not a whit cared the rider, nor yet the crowd, who rather shouted the louder in the cavalier's praise; for the shoes were silver, and whoever could pick them up kept them. There were smiths at hand, who nailed others on, but so loosely, that it was not long before they were flung off again.

The train, in consequence, made very slow progress, and, just as they rounded the corner, Elizabeth, and others with her of the spectators, screamed aloud, for the horsemen seemed not to look before them, but began to ride over the crockery-ware. And the hero himself, as if his horse was unmanageable, rode right against a whole tower of pots, which came down with a horrible clatter, and flew into a thousand pieces.

And so on, as his horse started back, he gave it the spur on the other side, and charged again at some other similar obstacle.

The father, Bartholomew, saw the anxiety portrayed in the lady's face, and he shouted up to her, "Don't be afraid, fair Elizabeth, they will all be paid for!" And so, indeed, it was; for behind the younker rode Dietrich Wyns, with a large sack on either side of his saddle-bow; and, as the pots and jugs were broken, he took out large handfuls of silver and copper money, and flung them to the owners. The potters, therefore, cared little about it, as one would have thought they might have done, but, on the contrary, beheld it all with perfect satisfaction. Many a one got paid double or treble the value of his crockery. Melchior, however, was not content till every heap was laid low, and every pot broken to pieces.* The one, who of all others seemed the most intensely delighted was the father, Herr Bartholomew. Tears of joy actually ran down his face, as he rode along on his cob poney, and when some of his party ventured to insinuate that his son had carried the joke far enough, he answered, "Do not grudge the lad his innocent enjoyment." The people, meanwhile, flung up their caps into the air, and they all said, that long as Berlin had stood, never had patrician paid visit to bride in so noble a manner. The elder burgesses said, amongst themselves, that it was one of those noble ways by which the rich

* Historical.

families might give their superabundance to the poor, and that it was an example worth following.

There was plenty of music furnished for the betrothal, for there were not only the fiddlers and trumpeters before the door, but also the idle lads clattering amongst the pots, and dashing them into smaller pieces against the statue of Ronald.

"Has the bridegroom's procession pleased you, fair bride?" asked Herr Bartholomew, as he stood before Elizabeth. Bride though she was, she looked rather like a lily than a rose, for her face was as pale as death. She was now no longer a child, but a fair woman, who might well have been already mistress of a household, so straight and comely was she grown, and so much dignity withal was in her gait and demeanour. There were no traces now of girlish coquetry in her face. Her lips were, to be sure, somewhat open, but when she opened her eyes it was with a seriousness, as if she would read into a person's very soul; and though she was dressed as for a particular occasion, yet it was with a simplicity which surprised all.

"You have entered the house, leaving destruction on your road. May it be no bad omen."

"Destruction!" chuckled Herr Bartholomew. "Yes, there is many a thing about to be destroyed. It is always the way. But are you frightened yet? The lad has made too much noise. You may trust yourself with him."

"I greet you, Herr Melchior; and you are welcome to this house."

"Is he not a glorious lad? It has not cost a little, but he is well worth laying something out about. Well; but speak, boy—speak."

"God's greeting, maiden Elizabeth, and you shall not remain so very long."

At this all laughed heartily, for the wedding was appointed for the day but one after. But it was not the custom for the betrothed to have much intercourse with each other, and perhaps neither of the pair knew well what they should say. The girl stood with downcast eyes. The bridegroom, however, threw now and then a look at her, and when he did so, a smile of satisfaction spread over his great broad mouth. But the others were not silent. There was all sort of whispered and pointed remarks, at which Melchior grinned, but Elizabeth drew back ashamed. It was the custom in those days for the old fellows to have a joke or two with betrothed people, and they carried it further than they do now.

They were next to exchange rings, and poor Elizabeth trembled for the first time, but Melchior could not get his glove off, and in the attempt the ring he was about to give slipped from his hand and fell to the ground.

There was a little inclination in the floor, for the house was old, and the one side had sunk a little; so, as they all sprang after the ring, it ran down and disappeared in a mouse's hole. It was impossible to recover it.

Many shook their heads at this. It was a terribly bad omen. Melchior himself was almost un-

manageable. He made as if he would stamp the boards through with his foot, and shouted for an axe. His father said it was all nonsense to make a fuss about a ring, one was as good as another; there was not such a weight of gold about it that a person should make a disturbance. And with that he tried to take his own ring from his finger, but his finger was swollen and it would not come off. There were some now who wished the ceremony to be postponed, but this was not to the taste of the majority, for the pasties and confections were already on the tables. They, therefore, sent to a goldsmith's with all possible haste, and succeeded in finding a ring which would do, but it sadly annoyed the rich old father, who said it was like a beggar man's ring, and not fit for a rich patrician. They succeeded in quieting him, for, after all, it was only a betrothal ring; so he revenged himself by ordering two to be prepared against the wedding, and they were to be more solid and heavier than any that had been as yet seen in Berlin.

Another thing that was far from right was that young Melchior should take too much wine on his betrothal day. He was not so bad as not to be able to walk, but he certainly could not walk straight, and two of his friends had to support him as he went down stairs. A good many found fault with this, as they thought he might have waited till evening; but his father said, "He is a find lad—let him alone." In the first place, he had eaten as much in honour of his bride as his bride had eaten little; and as he drank glass after glass,

he became as talkative as she was silent. He talked of things quite unfit for a bride's ear; he told how he had fought with one person, and staved in his ribs; with another, whose leg he had sprained; and of his having fastened some boats together on the Oder, when the sailors were asleep on shore, and let them drift with the stream—it was a fine joke when they awoke to see their boats on the way to Stettin. There were many things of this sort which were not so very bad, for who does not like to boast to his lady love of his strength and remarkable deeds. But as he got more wine into him, he began to tell of his love adventures, which was altogether out of place; in fact, he quite forgot that he was sitting next to his bride. There were some who ran to him to stop his mouth with their handkerchiefs, whilst his father, Herr Bartholomew, was shaking his very sides with laughing.

Amongst other things, it appeared, from what he said, that he had once had a quarrel with Henning Mollner, meeting him in a wine-cellar, and that Henning had been glad to jump through a window, whilst he, Melchior, threw a flagon of beer after him. At this, the paleness suddenly left the maiden's countenance, and a deep blush covered her face to the very forehead. She said, "That is not true."

Melchior beat his fist on the table till it rung again. "But it is true!" he shouted.

It was fortunate that there were those about him who knew how to turn the thing into a joke. Thomas Wyns got hold of him on one side and

Peter Brakow on the other, and as he reiterated the fact of his having flung Henning Mollner through a window, they told him he probably had flung himself after him, and so got confused about it. He kept swearing, however, that he would tell Henning it to his face the first time he saw him, and would meet him any day, either man to man or party to party. It was in vain they whispered to him that a tear was standing in his lady's eye, for Henning had been her playfellow and foster-brother, and now no one knew where he was, but most probably dead in exile.

"Ten thousand Hennings!" he shouted; "ten hundred thousand Hennings!—who cares for them?"

Bartholomew himself was obliged to interfere at last. "Steady, boy," he said; "all that is past and gone. If she did like Henning, what does it matter?—she need not know either how many girls have liked you."

"But she may know it!" shouted Melchior. "I don't care for Henning—not that much!" and he snapped his fingers.

"Are you jealous, Melchior?"

"I jealous!" he roared. "I am not jealous. I am her bridegroom, I will take my oath of that. Does anybody dispute it?"

"No one—no one," answered the others, laughing. "Then let us see that you are so, and give your bride your hand and a betrothal kiss."

The one who said the least at the table was Johannes Rathenow: for a long time he had not

been known to be so serious. The guests thought he ought to be much rejoiced at the style in which his daughter's bridegroom had come to his house ; the broken pots, they said, would cost three score of groschens alone, beside the silver horse-shoes. " But he is a regular mar-sport," said Thomas Wyns, " he thinks more about the towns than about his own family." Another rejoined, " There are many houses in a town, and the man who does not look after his own house is not the one to look after the others.' "

A sigh burst from the bottom of Johannes Rathenow's breast, and his look fell to the ground ; it was when he saw his daughter receiving the kiss of betrothal. She sat there, pale, and her air was that of suffering sadness. On turning her head to one side, their eyes met—the father's and the daughter's ; the look went to his very soul, and the wine-cup went from him untasted. It pleased him well that just then his guests rose to go. They were of good cheer, and had remarked nothing—they were right glad in anticipation of the union betwixt the families of Schumm and Rathenow, an union which promised concord and welfare to the towns, for Bartholomew was of the same mind as Johannes — not a finger's-breadth of the rights of the town would he surrender to the Mark-graf ; there were already those in the council who talked of submission.

When all were gone, the burgomaster retired to his chamber, and sat himself down, resting his head upon his hand. His daughter came to him.

“Do not pain yourself about me, dearest father ; you have plenty of other cares to grieve you.”

He took her hand, and played with it between his own, and the look he cast up to her was full of sorrow but full of affection : “ You are thoughtful and serious beyond your years, my dear child.”

“ They say that misfortune is a good school-mistress. How could I learn to be gay in a cloister, when I knew that my father was in exile ? But now you are again in your own home, you are reinstated in your rights, you are honoured and beloved, they listen to your slightest word, and they respect you as you deserve. I will learn to be gay again now.”

“ Your eyes belie your tongue, Elizabeth ; shall you indeed be happy ? ”

“ Father,” she replied, with an effort, “ I think I shall—I hope to be so. The good sisters in Spandow taught me the duties of the wife who has to rule over a large household ; and so will I act, and perform the duties of my station, as beseems a good German wife.”

“ I would gladly have given thee to another,” said Herr Johannes, half to himself.

She heard what he said, and hastily wiped away the tears which were gathering in her eyes. “ The other one is dead,” she said, low down. “ I loved Henning, father—dearly loved him. It was in the solitude of the cloister that I first knew I loved him. I used often to dream, father, when the storm was loud, that I saw you wandering on your pilgrim’s staff through the cold forest, and you

were weak, and could go no further; but then would come another into my dream—one who was also a pilgrim; and he sustained your steps with his strong arm, and led you on, and nourished you, and led you, and sang you cheering songs, and bid you hope on. Oh, Henning was one who always knew what to do!”

“Poor Henning!”

“Father, I dreamt that he came riding, a proud knight, to the gates of Berlin, and that he knocked loudly, and bade the trumpets blow, and led you once again to your honours and your rights.”

“He lies under the cold ground, God knows where.”

“But if you knew it was so, you would raise a stone to his memory such as he deserves, would you not, father? for he was good, and loved you well, and the town too. If he were here now, things would look far different. There lacks one like him, with courage such as he had. He would say a word to the citizens—he would lead them against the foe. Oh, father, the wicked men, they have sent their very best into exile!”

“And only the old and worthless return!”

“You would do it, father!” said the girl, with energy; and then she continued, low down, “I have buried Henning. Melchior will become your son, and God will give me strength.”

“You think he will?”

“Yes, father—yes. Elizabeth’s heart sleeps in the grave where Henning sleeps; but the daughter of the Rathenows—her father’s child—is also a

citizeness of her town, she too will rejoice when the rights of the towns are maintained, their freedom ensured. The bridge betwixt Berlin and Koeln will not again be broken down—it will be made doubly strong. This marriage will be a festival—not for Elizabeth nor for you, but it will be one for Johannes Rathenow, the son of his fathers, for our free towns, for patrician and working man—for us all, father. The Schumms and the Rathenows as one, a firm pillar will be built, against which all petty, miserable dissension will be shattered; and for that, father, is it not worth while that——”

What more she would have added was choked in its utterance by her tears, or by her father's arms, which wound the noble girl in their embrace. His eyes, too, were filled with tears, and he laid his hands upon her head and blessed her.

Old Nurse Gertrude had been a listener. When Elizabeth had rushed into her own chamber, she raised her voice.

“Johannes, the pillar will not be built—the bridge will not be strengthened—the bridal procession will not cross it—Elizabeth will not become Melchior's wife! The bridal ring fell into the mouse-hole; it is useless hoping, Johannes. The Schumms and the Rathenows will as little be united as the statue of Roland yonder will remain standing. See, see how he trembles—his time is come!”

CHAPTER XII.

THERE is seldom a ringing of bells in a town beleaguered by foes, save now and then the alarm-bell—a dead silence reigns throughout; it is as when, in former times, an interdict had been launched against it.

And yet to-day the bells rang in the towns of Saint Nicholas, and Saint Mary's, and they were answered from Saint Peter's; even the Franciscans and the Hospital of Saint Gertrude allowed their little bells to tinkle. They were not alarm-bells, oh, no—they rang ceremoniously, as if the steeples were greeting one another. The Mark-graf's people outside the walls interpreted it to be derision; at any rate, it was enough to shew that the burgesses cared little about their enemies.

On the morning of the same day a small party of horsemen had drawn rein on a little hill known as the Temple Court. It was a more respectable hill then than it is now, but there was not much

wood upon it; it was covered with vines, whose stems were planted in circling lines around it. The horsemen bore the Mark-graf's badges, and they strained their eyes to gain the first view of the two towns as the morning mist slowly began to clear away. It was a glorious morning, and as the veil arose the roofs and towers sparkled rarely in the morning sun.

"Do not those warrens of theirs look as if they were wallowing drunk in their own bogwater," said one of the horsemen, "as if one could put one's foot on them and stamp them in."

"You would needs have a good large foot, Buffo," answered another. "Crush them down—they spring up again; the ground is very elastic."

"This is a capital position," rejoined the first speaker; "had we but three heavy cannon, we could riddle Koeln from here."

"Your 'had we' is all very well," said the other; but the question, 'have we?' would be better. Unfortunately, we have not. The Mark-graf will not risk bringing his heavy pieces from Spandow through Teltow, they are too strong there; and if it is true that Zarnekow is coming to help them, he may hardly keep his ground in Temple Court."

"The plague take Zarnekow!" said Buffo, laughing; "he was ever an ox as far as his bones go, but a very calf in understanding. To think of his being thought so much of!"

"You used to be friends with him."

"Pish, Ritter Bardeleben, do not bring up what is past!"

"There may be a time 'to come' in it."

"A lump of flesh with enormous bones! One might ride against a gate with him, or fill a ditch with him, but there must always be a some one else to set him on. All I say is, that it is enough to make a wise man despise his better understanding, when he sees a lump of bacon like he is, carrying on, and getting a name and reputation."

"He will come to the gallows yet!"

"That is an ugly word, Bardeleben, but it certainly is right comical to see those Berlin folks sending for one like him. One lives to see many a queer thing. By the holy cross, I could almost wish that the siege lasted awhile only to see how he will play the devil with his dear companions of the yard-stick and sausage! They could not have chosen better."

"There was not much else for them."

"There is confoundedly too much," said Buffo; "I tell you they have a better friend on our side than they have in Zarnekow, or amongst themselves. That one will make them pay pretty dear for his friendship, but the one I speak of will handle them so tenderly that half our fun will be spoiled. Will it come to a storm? Will there be plundering? Shall we be allowed to carry on, when we get inside, as Zarnekow will as their friend? God help you! He will put you on silk gloves when he rides through the breach. There is Nürnberg blood in him. Pedlar holds with pedlar."

"I think you are mistaken, Buffo."

“Pray Heaven I am ! It would be the best possible mistake. But what makes him dally so long with his complaint before the states ? and what does the negotiation mean going on yet when we are already come to blows, burning, and making prisoners ? These accursed mouth words——”

“Will not make the matter a hair's breadth better or worse,” interrupted Bardeleben. “It is all for appearance's sake. I tell you the Mark-graf's blood boils, and he will not forgive them for that wooden shield business of theirs, as long as their walls are standing. I know what these Hohenzollers are ; they appear long suffering and charitable beyond measure, but an insult they never forget. He will make their great gentlemen very little, and their wealthy he will make poor. He will put his iron foot down in their towns, so that the print may be seen for centuries to come.”

“Very good ; but what do we get by it ? He uses one against another, but he uses them all for his own purposes. He lets us have our run just now, but he has a tether round our legs to pull us back as soon as ever he chooses. The old times are gone, Bardeleben, when we were our own masters. And that cold, calm look of his, it goes through one's very marrow !”

“Has he favoured you with one of his looks ? Oh, oh, Buffo, how your tune is altered ! We all thought you on the highest step of the ladder of his favour. Every one was jealous of you.”

“They are too knowing—that is the worst of it ; there is no getting round them.”

“They see before them a long way. What is to be the end of it no one knows!” said Bardeleben. “But what I know is, that it will be a good while yet before it comes to the end; and it will not come to an end without war, and there will be no war, but we shall be in it. He stands in need of us, and his successors will do the same; so never fear, Ritter Voss, he will keep well with the nobility; he dare not quarrel with them!”

As he spoke, they heard the ringing of bells, not a little to their surprise. Bardeleben thought it must be a passing bell, but Buffo shook his head. “Listen,” he said; “that is not the way they ring a body to the grave—it is a scoff at us; it sounds as merry as a wedding peal.”

“And that is what it is,” cried another, who advanced at the moment. “They are celebrating some marriage in defiance of us. It will be a wedding. Melchior Schumm will be conducting his bride home—Elizabeth Rathenow.”

“Curses and fury!” cried Buffo; “and we to be freezing here!”

“Yes, we did not come here to a wedding,” rejoined the new comer, who was no other than Balzer Boytin.

“And not to our own especial honour and credit either,” put in old Bardeleben, with a look askance at the horse-dealer.

“Did not some one sing to you in your cradle?” asked Buffo, sneeringly, “how that you would one day head a mighty host with noble knights fighting at your back?”

“Fair sirs,” answered the horse-dealer, “there is many a one may serve as the cat’s paw with which the ape reaches the chesnut from the fire-bars, without having had it sung to him in his cradle.”

“Which is the most profitable?” asked Bardeleben, “dealing in men or dealing in horses, Balzer?”

“It depends upon what sort of men they are, or what sort of horses. My master used to say that such as were the best trained, and did not kick, were the best of either sort.”

“May the fiend take me,” said Buffo, “but I would like to have the money which the Mark-graf pays to Boytin. Judas betrayed his Lord for thirty pieces of silver; now just tell us how much you are to have for all the souls you have boxed up yonder?”

“Judas, sirs, was a villain, and betrayed his master. You may know better than I do how that sort of work gets paid. I was their burgomaster, and held them guilty for treason against their liege lord. Work like that gets paid ever with a money coined out of steel. Its name is ingratitude.”

“If I were the Mark-graf, I should know how to drive a good business,” said Buffo.

“His highness manages his affairs very well, when he has not some people I could name to manage them for him.”

“When he has horse-dealers in his council he may well do well.”

"If he would drive the Jews from the land we should be rid of a plague; but if every Jew was made to take up a nobleman behind him, the litany would then be two intercessions shorter."

"The Jews interfere with your profits, Balzer?" asked Bardeleben.

"The poor Jews find little left to take where noble knights have been before them."

"My idea is of another sort," said Buffo. "Were I the Mark-graf, I would have the towns without drawing sword."

"Your tongue would be sharp enough, especially if you had honest people to rail against."

"Do you know, Boytin, what it is that would get the towns to give themselves up for nothing?"

"Not a God's blessing."

"You are right, God has nothing to do with what I mean. When he created heaven and earth, he left the devil something lest he should be envious. He created horse-dealers."

"Is that how you read it? I read it otherwise. Ritters used to go a foot, and so they got caught, and hung up on every hand. So the devil took pity of them, and stole horses for them. So now they ride the high horse, and poor horse-dealers must rack their brains to find beasts for them."

"Give over squabbling. What is that coming yonder, horse and man?" asked Bardeleben.

"I only have to tell him my riddle," said Buffo. "If I was the Mark-graf, it is you I would give to the towns, Boytin; they would open their gates if

only just to have the pleasure of seeing you swinging in the wind. What is the wager?"

They were now interrupted by a sound of trumpets, with rattling of harness and neighing of horses.

"Holy saints!" cried Buffo, "the work is begun!"

"The Mark-graf!" cried Bardeleben.

"Enemies!" shouted Balzer; and they gave their horses the spur and disappeared.

Of all such as this the Berlin people knew nothing. The merry sound of the bells was what they listened to, and, save the watchers on the walls, the whole town was agog. Oh, the gay holiday clothes! Along the streets, through which the procession was to pass, every window was full. From each, too, hung garlands and gay-coloured ribbons. The doors were hung with festoons, and the streets strewed with white sand. The procession might be best seen as it ascended towards Saint Nicholas'. So gay were the dresses of the Schumm party that the eye could scarce be trusted. Again had Melchior a doublet and hose of white satin, with shoes of the same, but so slashed and ruffled, and so full across the nether parts, that he measured more than we dare venture to say; at any rate, it was as much as he could do to reach his arm to his bride. Over all, he wore a short cloak of crimson velvet, braided with the richest lace. Wealthy as he was, the spectators thought it all too costly. Elizabeth was clad in white, but her dress was re-

marked by none. "How beautiful she is!" said one to another. "How pale she is!" Some said it was from illness. "Pleasure has that effect," said one. But others thought it was, perhaps, her immurement so long in the cloister. "It is very good of the Schumms to take her after that." And thus the talk went on, but none spoke aloud, and few noticed how she almost staggered as she turned the corner, and applied for a smelling-bottle.

Who can tell how it was, for there was everything there that one could wish, and more too; and when the bells were a moment silent, the fiddlers and pipers fiddled and blew, yet for all that there was not that merriment which is usual in a bridal train. It seemed to be felt by all, and one looked at another. "The enemy is before the gates," whispered some. "What do the Schumms care about that?" said one. "Or the Rathenows either," said another.

"God knows how it is," said a bystander, "but whatever the Rathenows have to do with, is sure to have a grave face on it. However merry one might be, one would be obliged to disguise it."

A second pointed to Frau Eva Brakow, as the poor pretty little woman passed by, half-smothered under her finery: "Elizabeth Rathenow is very well—there is no denying that; but Eva Brakow is far handsomer. She is so plump, and has such red cheeks; anybody might be pleased with her; and one would know what one had."

In this way the whispers ran round, for there

was no lack of envious people, who grudged what either party had, and talked against the patricians, who eat up all the others, and were always at the top whatever might happen.

An enormous crowd had gathered at the church-door. So full was it at the principal entrance, that, believe it who will, there was no chance of entrance by it even for the bridal party. They would have had to remove numbers by force, and who would undertake to do that ; and if they did it, where were the people to go. They, therefore, adopted at once the only course there was—that of entering the church by a small side door. This was another bad omen to not a few ; but even here the crowd was so dense, that Melchior lost more than one of his knots of ribbons in struggling through. In the doorway the myrtle wreath fell from the head of the bride. It was fortunate that but few saw it, for Herr Dietrich Wyns picked it hastily up, and replaced it ; only he put it on the wrong side first.

A hundred torches were burning in the church, and the smoke of incense floated to the highest rafters ; the gilded mouldings on the pillars, and the golden candlesticks on every altar, gave back the light a hundred-fold. The worthy provost, Herr Francis Steeger, stood by the high altar, attended by the deacons and the choristers in their white robes turned up with red. It was a scene to cause emotion in every mind. The bridal pair advanced, and with them their party, and the patricians of the two towns ; not one was wanting.

The oration the provost made was very magnificent, but it was lost to the ears of the bride. It seemed to her as if the church was dark and full of mists, as if unearthly lights were burning up first here and then there, and as if the very floor shook under her. It may, perhaps, be not unusual for a bride to feel thus. The discourse was sadly too long—so thought Melchior, for the provost spoke at great length about the towns, and the hallowed bond which promised them henceforth union and strength; and every now and then he brought in a Latin sentence or two. Herr Schumm had requested that he would—not, however, that he understood it; but Latin is an uncommon and a very polite language, and used to be spoken by the ancient emperors. Besides, what priest would think of introducing Latin into an address when marrying vulgar people?

And now the priest, according to his duty, asked the questions whether he, Melchior, would have Elizabeth, and whether she, Elizabeth, would have Melchior; and he held up the rings which were to be exchanged between them. Just then a sort of spasm seemed to seize the bride. It was not at the priest that she looked, nor yet at the bridegroom; her gaze rested on something in the direction of the portal, her eyes glistened marvelously, and her lips half opened, as if from cramp, as she raised herself on her toes, and trembled. It was a trembling as when one sees a dead man restored to life; and as the priest asked her, "Will you take him?" she answered, "No." But

whilst she said it she trembled again, as if every sinew and muscle were broken, and fell corpse-like on the floor, whilst the bridal wreath rolled far away amongst the crowd.

The uproar which arose at this moment in the church may well be conceived, but it was not caused by what we have narrated only. The "No" which the poor girl had uttered had been heard by none, save old Nurse Gertrude, who caught her in her arms. Melchior's "yes" was far too loud to allow of a maiden's weak reply being heard. That a bride, who was much agitated on entering the church, should faint before the ceremony was ended, was, to be sure, no very common occurrence; but still such things have happened in all times.

The uproar arose from quite a different cause. The alarm bells rang furiously from every tower, and a cry was heard, "The enemy—the enemy! To arms!" There was not a moment to be lost—that was evident from the furious ringing of the bells. Out they rushed into the streets, patricians and common folk; and not a few were so squeezed in the passage through the church-door, as to be unable to handle their weapons as the others did. Elizabeth, meanwhile, lay senseless beneath the altar-steps, and the storm bells rang over her like the thunders of the destroying angel.

When her senses returned there was no one with her, save Nurse Gertrude only. The old woman's grey hood and kerchief ill accorded with the appearance of wedding festivity.

"Where is he?" she asked, and her eyes were turned from the altar, seemingly wishing to penetrate the clouds of smoke which were curling up towards the roofs.

"Away, away! all are gone; there is no wedding!"

"No wedding!" echoed the girl, and her eye gleamed with an expression resembling joy.

"There is an attack," said the Nurse.

"But I saw him!"

But Gertrude was busy unwinding the bridal wreath, and pulling the myrtles to pieces.

"How can there be any wedding, when the rings fall into mouse-holes, and the wreaths fall from the head of the bride? Folly, folly! there must come another bridegroom!"

The drums and trumpets outside made what else she said inaudible. Johannes returned for a moment, and kissed the forehead of his daughter, who had once more become insensible in the arms of the old woman, and he hurried away again, leaving Gertrude the charge of seeing his sick child home.

CHAPTER XIII.

THERE was but little talk of the interrupted marriage that day, and as little the next, in either Koeln or Berlin. They had far other things to think of and talk about; they had to succour the wounded and bury the dead. Fires were burning on every hearth, and huge pans were simmering over them. In many places the ashes of conflagrations were still smothering, and there were wild faces to be seen in the streets, scarred visages, with undressed beards, such as had never been seen before in Berlin. To these also what they saw was strange, for they opened their staring eyes at everything. They were men whom one would have feared to meet if alone, and yet the citizens went amongst them as if they were friends, and brought them meat, and bread, and beer, and even drank with them. Many of the shops, too, were opened, and afforded lodgings for these strange allies. Their chieftain was lodged in

the great house in the Cloister-street, notwithstanding that many, including Johannes Rathenow, liked it but little; but what were they to do with him. "Will you have him in your house?" asked Blankenfelde; and no one would, even they who had the largest houses.

The list of prisoners they had taken, and the names of such of them as were of quality, were written in the towns' books, and surprised the patricians not a little. There were so many knights of renown; there was Barfuss, Rohr, two Sydows, Hanneke Arnim, Ludecke Stechow, Balthazar Roeder, Wilkin Quast, and his son Ruprecht; also, Buffo Voss, and many another. Many of them were sorely wounded. They only took their swords from them, and gave them knightly entertainment in the town-hall; but first they presented them with a cup in honour, as was right and proper. When Buffo Voss had drained his goblet, he shook Hoppenrade's hand, who had offered it, and said, "Me to-day, you to-morrow."

The few senators who came together in the council-chamber that evening were sorely tired. They had taken their share with the rest, and could boast of wounds and contusions; the wounded ones were borne to their homes. What they discussed was, whether they should cause a *Te Deum* to be sung in St. Nicholas' church for the victory they had that day won.

"Is it, then, a victory?" asked Konrad Ryke; "if we count our prisoners, we may perhaps call it one; but should the Mark-graf count his, in

Temple-court yonder, don't you think he may sing, and give thanks too? May St. Nicholas preserve us from another victory like this!"

And when they came to calculate their losses, their countenances fell, and they looked melancholy enough. Pawel Strobant was a prisoner; he had fought like a buffalo, and had struck off Tilly Kracht's ear. Herr Garnekoser, Herr Bergholz, Mathis Blankenfelde's nephew, the wild young Wilfrid, and their good town captain, the Ritter Ruthnik, were not found, besides the stranger knight whom no one knew; and then their wounded—Peter Brakow had a lance point right through his left hand. There were not many killed, and most of them were poor people, who perish without any one asking who they are.

"I think, therefore," continued Konrad Ryke, "that the victory was a victory for the towns, but a sore victory for the heads of the towns. And what will our matrons say when they hear the bells ringing, whilst in their houses all is still as death, and we singing and praising the Lord, whilst their good men are lying groaning in their beds? This victory has saved us from a sudden danger, and let us thank God for it in our hearts, but let us not invoke a second danger by giving open expression to our thankfulness. This victory has weakened us, and especially us who are patricians. Who takes count of the sixty or more tradespeople who lie wounded, and the dozen or more taken prisoners? But it is for us to take account of it. There are few of us left to command on the walls

and at the gates. The heads of the trades are the masters there, and they are already too confident in their own strength."

Herr Johannes Rathenow was much of the same opinion, and he spoke as follows, without disguise: "We have fellow-helpers within our walls to whom we owe thanks, but what they may want more than thanks which of us can tell? We have not yet reckoned how many of them there are; but they lie in every street, and are obedient at a word as long as we direct them; but if we should have to take counsel with the heads of trades, all would come out, and they would know our council as well as ourselves. We were free, but now we have a garrison, and we have given the Mark-graf's palace, for the time, to Koepkin. Good sirs, it is not for us to sing songs of praise, but to open well our eyes and ears, for Koepkin may prove a worse master to us than ever the Mark-graf was."

It was agreed, therefore, that no *Te Deum* should be sung; everything came to pass just as the senators had foreseen. The very next morning, Zarnekow demanded a bounty for his men—a score of groschens for every one that had fallen, and a recompence for each of the wounded; he also required that an ox and five swine should be roasted daily for his band, over and above the provision which had been made for them till then. There was a good deal of demurring about it, but they were forced in the end to award it. Meanwhile, Zarnekow lived like a prince in the palace; he seldom came out, and made all who wanted to see him

wait his pleasure. He did it to mortify them. It was evident he had not forgotten his former quarrels with the towns, though he had sworn in the agreement, that everything should be buried in oblivion. But more of this anon.

The slight success they had had, turned the citizens' heads. The wine-vaults and taverns echoed their wonderful narrations, and each one had done better than his neighbour; there was no making any sense of what they said. Each one began his story from the time when he himself sallied forth; all that was done before and after was nothing at all. Most of them had been in different parts of the affray, so every one had a different tale to tell. So, whether Koepkin had attacked the Mark-graf in his position at Temple-court, or the Mark-graf had fallen upon him on his entering Koeln, was a matter of uncertainty. To hear Koepkin talk, he alone had done anything. But it was far otherwise; for, after a struggle on the eminence before named, his people were forced back to the meadows, where Friederichstadt now stands, and it would have gone hard with him, had not the citizens sallied just in time from the Teltow gate. First came the tanners and the woolcombers, then the shoemakers under Herr Garnekoser, with others of the patricians on horseback; and they would not have sufficed, for Tilly Kracht and his troop fought the ground all the way to the Werder, only he was too hasty, and forgot to notice whether sufficient followed him or not, so many were cut off, and Barfuss, Sydow, Arnim, and others, were shut in and

taken. After that, they drew more north, towards the Spree, and away down the street now called the Ross-strasse—patricians and tradesfolk, horse and foot. It was a regular hunt, and many a hard blow was struck there, and many a wound received too. One does not mind these things at first, but they are so much the worse afterwards. Yes, if the people had been properly led on, it would have gone badly with the noble knights. The citizens were more in number than the assailants, even without Zarnekow's band, but they rushed from the gates as one rushes from a house when there is a cry of fire; many had their armour only half on, and they were all in confusion—patricians and citizens poking one another with their long pikes; there was no lack of courage. Ritter Ruthnik, who should have taken the command, came too late; he had been in the church, and was not able to get through the crowd; and when he came to don his armour, first one thing gave way, then another; even when he got to the bridge, his greaves were dangling loose about his legs. He tried to make up for lost time, and the Schumms and Brakows, who were behind, shouted him on. He gave his horse the spur, and they could not keep up with him; so he got single-handed amongst the enemy, and his horse stumbled, and he lost his helmet. He was obliged to give himself up. It was sorely against his will, for he was a good knight, and had the towns' welfare at heart. The Schumms tried to cut him out, but Bartholomew got a lance thrust from a Count Itzenplitz, which hove him

from his saddle. He was not able to mount again that day.

The Mark-graf's people fared little better. They got into the foss, and many of them were taken. Friz Rohr, the dare-devil, would not give himself up. The butchers were behind when his horse fell under him; he wobbled over it into the mud, and stuck there waist-deep. The butchers stood and jeered him; they undertook to see him safe, if he would yield himself, but he only answered them with imprecations. This is what the old song is about—

“ Who flounders yonder in the mud,
And swears so lustily?
That is the mad-cap, good Fritz Rohr;
In Zoffen fain were he!”

For the Mark-graf, had given Rohr the castle of Zoffen, though only to hold for his life-time. A little after, as the butchers were obliged to save themselves, there came up the Ritter Schlippenbach, Kurt Salbern, and a man named Wiedenwald. They laid a plank down, but Schlippenbach's foot slipped, and they had to pull him out with ropes. The song goes on—

“ Kurt Salbern cried, ‘ Oh, good Fritz Rohr,
Say, are you sore wounded ?’
‘ The plague !’ he said, ‘ I stick here fast,
Half choked, and nearly dead !’
“ ‘ Oh dear, oh dear, good Wiedenwald !’
The Schlippenbach spoke out,
‘ This must right soon be remedied,
But how to set about ?’

“ They brought a plank, and laid it down,
But Schlippenbach slipped in ;
They all right sorry were, and yet
Fritz did to laugh begin.

“ ‘ A rope !—nought else will e’er avail !’
Spake Wiedenwald, the true ;
‘ We’ll throw it then about his neck,
And drag him safely through !’

“ Was e’er such sight seen heretofore,
As knights to hangmen turned !
To drag a Ritter in a cord,
And not by him be spurned ?”

Had Fritz Rohr given himself up to the butchers, it would not have gone so very badly with him, for they liked him for his mad freaks. He had sold them many an ox, and had caused them good sport. One day, when a mad ox had broken loose, he had thrown himself upon it, and seizing its horns, had flung himself on its back, and ridden so through the town, till he got it back again to the shambles. This had gained the butchers’ good will ; and when he came to Berlin, they had been in the habit of entertaining him in their inn, and considering it a great honour that he went with them. It would have been a great credit to them had they taken him, and they would have entertained him nobly, and set him up every noon in their inn, that everybody might see him. It was very well they did not get him, for the butchers were quite presuming enough as it was.

Oh ! if they had caught Balzer Boytin, it would have been quite another thing. And they were very near it. The tailors can do little with the

pike, or the sword, but they are well enough with the cross-bow. Hans Zademack would himself have given five score groschens could he have caught him, so enraged was he against him. But the tailors were on foot, and Balzer Boytin turned away when he saw them. But Zademack sent a bolt after him, which hit him in a certain place where he had no armour. It was three full weeks before the horsedealer could sit a horse again, though the wound was not dangerous.

Just then the tailors came into the thick of the fight. They got on but poorly with their lances, and, besides, they sank up to their knees. Old Bardeleben ordered his men to dismount, and bade the Mark-graf's light troops advance. The poor tailors' hearts began to beat. Twang went the crossbows, and away flew the bolts whistling. The most of them, to be sure, into the bushes, but there were not a few which found a mark. But now for a time, everything went against the townspeople. Zarnekow had quite enough to do, to keep his people face to face with Tilly Kracht, and his party, whilst the marshal, Heine Voss, with Ewald Schenk, and Dietrich Waldow, and a whole host of the Mark-graf's people, had very near cut off the retreat of the citizens, and were assailing them on all sides. It was now that Pawel Strobant was wounded and taken. It was well that a party of heavy-armed men made their appearance just then, riding hard towards the bridges. They were coppersmiths, a few butchers, and brewers, and tinnern—all substantial people, well mounted.

They were well provided with armour, many clad from head to foot, and all with steel shirts and helmets. Sometimes it is well to come early, and hurry—sometimes to take time. We saw how it fared with the Ritter Ruthnik. The fact of the butchers and coppersmiths having given themselves time to arm, so as to be able to cope, in some degree, with the ablest knights, decided the day. Only for them, the town would have been taken, and had it been taken by storm, who can say whether, to-day, there would have been such a town as Berlin.

At the head of this party rode Bartz Kuhlemey, the head of the butchers' guild, and with him a knight whom no one knew. His harness was of silver, and he wore his visor closed. The skin of a panther flowed loose from his shoulders, and on his helmet he bore a golden eagle. His horse, though half covered with costly trappings, might still be known to be of Arabian breed. But soon he and his party were lost sight of; for the knight sprang upon the enemy as a panther springs amongst a herd of oxen—it is at once in the midst of them, and confusion, and dust, and cries of fear, are the only guide to the exact place where it is. For a moment the knight bore high aloft the banner of the butcher's guild, that all might see it. But he speedily flung it to another, and, lance in rest, he bore down on the enemy. Not many paces behind him came Bartz Kuhlemey. They came in contact with no unworthy foes; but, worthy as they were, they were forced to give way. It was

the town's salvation, for one party was fresh, the other had been some time in the fray.

Still the best knights were there. Otto and Gerhard Schliefen, Bernhard Lossow, Red Hans Kroecker, and Fritz Kerkowe. There were Heinrich Osten, Hans Wedel, and Heinrich Borke, a trio who always fought side by side, and slept in the same tent together. There were Heine von Schlabrendorf, Goetze von Redern, Fritz Blankenburg, the lesser, with Biberstein, and one of the Rochows. There were also Walter Ziethen, Dietrich Carpzow, Heinrich von Barby, and Balthazar von Schenkendorf. Every one of them had to turn tail. On came the butchers, and coppersmiths, following their leader bravely. It was like a hunt, and the dust flew up merrily. It was the salvation of the town, for now the other trades would no longer give way. They began also to gain ground; and as for Zarnekow, he laid about him in a perfect fury. His people, however, began very soon to turn their attention to the wounded and slain, and in a very short time, there were three whole heaps of clothes, shoes, armour, horse-trappings, and other things piled up. This was a sort of thing which they understood better than anything else, and it mattered little to them that the fight was still hot on the side of the Temple Court.

When they reached this eminence, and the butchers began to perceive how many their opponents were, and how few there were of themselves, for many remained behind, they also began to see the propriety of giving ground. In the dust and con-

fusion, they did not perceive that their leaders were not amongst them. The coppersmiths were the first to face about, and it was not soon forgotten of them, though they did no more than did the others, and they had borne themselves well in the fray. The two leaders were taken. The Red Kroeher struck Bartz Kuhlemey from his horse, so he was obliged to surrender himself. The knight in the silver harness defended himself like one possessed. But what could one man do amongst so many? It was a perfect wonder to behold him. Eleven bore marks of his prowess. Heinrich Barnekow's right hand he struck off at a blow. At last, as he grew faint, (one could see that he could scarcely raise his arm), Heine Schlabrendorf shouted to him—"Yield thee on knightly word! Thou hast fought like a brave knight, and shalt be knightly dealt with." So he yielded himself. But his sword was so tight in his grasp, that it was with difficulty they could twist it out; and, as they helped him to dismount, he was unable to stir a limb, and sank down, as if dead, from sheer exhaustion. Dietrich Carpzow threw back his visor. "I do not know him," he said; nor did any one. Bartz Kuhlemey being wounded, could not tell them, and that day it was neither known in the town, nor in the Markgraf's camp, who the Ritter was.

CHAPTER XIV.

“TRULY, it is no time now for banqueting and vain display,” said the father, “for everything is against us. But, when the waters break their bounds, we clamber for safety on to a feeble raft, and the drowning man will catch at the willow twig, though it gives way under his hand.”

“But is it then so bad?” asked the maiden, as she sat, a picture of woe, her look turned to the floor. Alas! her gay attire, and the ornaments she wore, presented a sad contrast to her pale face, and to the tears which gathered full below her long eyelashes, and which fell now and then, despite of all her efforts to wipe them away unseen.

“Worse it is than we like to think. Every day sees us weaker, and the Mark-graf stronger. He has possessed himself of our villages—he cuts off our supplies—he bars our road both by land and water. Still this we might endure for a time, for the fortune of war changes. But discord is again

rife amongst us. The poor people grumble, the trades disagree together, and the senate is deafened with their complaints. And if that were the worst ! But the ardour of the patricians is already cooled : first one, and then another, murmurs in the senate about their lands being overrun, and pillaged, and burnt. They say they have to give all, and to receive nothing. The old disputes between one family and another are reviving. They begin, once more, to measure how much one and another gives ; and, if any one brings anything forward for the general good, they hint again that he has his own motives."

"Father, that will all be otherwise. I shall be Melchior's wife. I am already well again."

"But there is now another cause of anxiety, my child. We are no longer free. We are prisoners even within our own walls. Koepkin's insolence increases every day. He sits yonder in the palace, as lord of all. He commands on the walls—at the gates—where he will. He asks none of us. It lacks only that he interfere with us in our own households. I dare not reflect upon the conduct of his companions—upon the dishonour their ways cast upon us. Only yesterday, he forced himself into the senate, and sat himself in the burgomaster's chair. There were some even, who thanked him for the honour he conferred on us ; and now they want to give him this banquet by way of appeasing him, just as one coaxes a wild animal lest it tear us."

"And are you in favour of it, father ?"

His countenance fell. "My child," he said, there is no escape for us. We wish——"

"Well then, dearest father, why more words. That which must be done, and Johannes Rathenow says must be done, his daughter will know how to do too. I will be right fain to do it."

There was the quiet of woe in the house. Both of them knew what neither would say to the other. Which suffered most, the father or the daughter, I indeed cannot tell.

The banquet on that evening was right merry, if wine, and music, and brilliant light can lighten the heart when it is heavy. It was held in the senate-house. Never before had there been so much wine drunk in Berlin in a single evening. The men drank to gain courage, or to wash down the memory of the misfortunes which were befalling them. Yet only one of them required to be carried home. No music accompanied him, and the torches were held low down. But never were such strange faces seen at a banquet. Some of Koepkin's companions appeared as if they were now for the first time in the presence of honest people. They wore clothes which did not fit them. Who can tell whose they had been the day before?—or the day before that? Their captain laughed to see the patricians start, when encountering the glance of one of these. But they were forced to put up with it. It would have been well had that been all. Some of the knightly prisoners were also there. There was no harm in that, for they knew how to behave themselves far better than Koepkin's officers. But still

they strutted about with surprising effrontery—not at all as if they were prisoners, but rather as if they were the lords of the feast. They stroked down their beards complacently, and looked over their shoulders at the burgesses. Their behaviour to the ladies gave great offence. But there came worse than that. They drank, too, with Koepkin, turning their backs on the patricians, which certainly was very incorrect.

Koepkin Zarnekow himself sat like the ruler of the feast. Apparently it was his giving, and the rest were only his invited guests. He wore, as if to spite them, his worst leather hose, and his jack-boots were dirty.

One leg he threw upon a chair, and he sat there jingling his spurs, looking in the guests' faces, and nodding now and then patronisingly to one or another. The proud patricians gnashed their teeth, whilst Buffo, who sat beside him, laughed in his sleeve. This last one could be a courtier when he liked, as we know, but to-day it pleased him well to see his captors so unceremoniously treated.

Herr Peter Brakow sat in a corner, his hand bound up, and his arm in a sling. His father-in-law, Bartholomew Schumm, sat beside him. The latter looked far different to-day to his usual wont. Herr Mathis Blankedfelde stood before them; Mathis had been holding a polite conversation with Zarnekow. Eva Brakow came every now and then inquiring how her husband was, and patting his face; then she would join the dance again.

“An affectionate wife,” said Peter Brakow, after one of his wife’s visits.

“What does that signify to me?” growled Bartholomew. “If this goes on as it does, we must all go a begging again.”

“We must all go a begging again!” chimed in Mathis Blankenfelde.

“Five waggons—heavy-laden waggons—captured from me at Beelitz; two of my best servants killed. What good is Zarnekow to us, if he cannot even keep the Teltow road open to us?”

So spake Herr Schumm. Mathis replied: “He is no good to us; he does not keep our rear open. As for fighting, we have to do it ourselves, and, meanwhile, he is preying upon our very vitals.”

They spoke low down, and continued some time in close consultation. They seemed to assent to what Blankenfelde said, looking round every now and then to see that there were no listeners.

“As things stand at present, what is there left for us but to accept of the mediation proposed. We shall have to do it at last, every one may see that; and the only question is, whether we should wait longer or act at once. We do not stand so very well now, but we may yet stand worse. At present, Frankfort, Brandenburg, and Prenzlau are to mediate for us. The Kurprince is content that it be so. Who knows whether he will be so after another week, or whether the towns can do it or will do it then?”

Peter Brakow answered only with a deep sigh.

Bartholomew Schumm muttered, "A dreadful bad business!"

"That is just what I say," continued Blankenfelde. "We are in a mess, and this mess we cannot get out of ourselves. A sensible man, therefore, would take hold of the first helping hand offered him."

Brakow said: "If the Bredows and Rochows had not happened to be just away, going to Ruppín, our walls on that side were unprotected. Every man who could bear arms was at the Teltow gate; our walls would have been scaled without a blow."

"That is as I say," put in Blankenfelde. "We have got to know now that Johannes Rathenow means well to us, but a man may be honest without being competent. He is very upright, but very stubborn; but I do not blame him for leaving the walls unprotected. Who is there that can think of everything? only the smallest mistake of one in authority causes more mischief than a thousand mistakes of any one else. Overlooking a single point may risk the safety of the towns. But then, again, who can blame him, and on the day, too, of his only daughter's wedding. The best amongst us might have our heads turned."

"There must be an alteration somewhere," said Herr Bartholomew.

"There must be something done," added Peter Brakow.

"Only it is no wonder," rejoined Blankenfelde. "If our patron saint would mercifully come to our

aid, my prayer would be that Johannes' stubborn spirit might be softened."

"Well, well!" grumbled Herr Bartholomew.

"If we could only manage to-day," began Peter Brakow, "to get Zarnekow to sally out."

"He be got!" interrupted Mathis. "He lies amongst us, like a beast chewing the cud; it never enters his head to take the field against the Markgraf. You will see it does not. He has excuses enough to make, too, when he condescends to make them; he contemns us openly."

"And whom does he associate with?" said Hoppenrade, who had now joined the party. "He drinks night and day with the prisoner knights. How do we know whether he is not betraying us as well as laughing at us?"

"It must be decided soon," said Brakow. "If he refuses again—we are too weak, but we must not have him in the town when we sally out. I shall bring it before the senate to-morrow."

"A sour business!" said Hoppenrade, sighing.

"Don't think so," put in Blankenfelde. "When an evil is unavoidable, it brings its own cure with it. There will not be one with Johannes Rathenow, except Konrad Ryke; they all want peace."

"And yet a sour business," said Brakow, "for who likes to be taunted with betraying his town? And though the fall be unavoidable, who likes to pull the first stone from under the house wall, or strike the first stroke at a tree that one likes, though it is rotten, and must be felled?"

There was a pause. Brakow and Hoppenrade

went together towards the saloon, whence the sound of conviviality came ever louder. Even Bartholomew raised himself, with much grunting, on to his legs. "Now that we know that it was Henning who went out with the butchers, and was taken," said Blankenfelde to him, in an indifferent tone of voice, "it seems a little strange to me, that he should be back again here just in time for your son's wedding."

Herr Bartholomew noticed this remark by a most expressive stare.

"I mean nothing by the remark, dear sir; I only say it happens curiously. Things happen accidentally, you know, in the world; but still everything is not accident. It was an accident, for instance, his being taken; but whether his being in the church, and shewing himself just when the ceremony was performing, was an accident or not—that is all. There are some who whisper that Elizabeth said 'No' just before she fainted away. A sudden illness like that might happen from different causes."

"Bother and nonsense," fell from the lips of the Koeln senator, and he puffed the wind out of his fat cheeks most audibly. "Herr Mathis Blankenfelde," said he, "I don't know what you are driving at. What I think and mean I do know. The devil fetch you all! What need is there to throw another dead rat on to a dunghill—eh, good sir? We go to church; and let it rain Hennings, and hail Hennings, we go to church,

and Melchior will be Johannes' daughter's bridegroom. Now sir !”

It was a long time since Herr Bartholomew had spoken so distinctly—there must have been some cause for it. The noise in the hall continued; Koepkin and Melchior were drinking together; they were drinking good fellowship and brotherhood. They seemed mutually to agree; the lad liked the knight for his plain speaking, and the knight seemed to have taken a fancy to Melchior; so they drank brotherhood in huge goblets, the two arms which held the goblets interwoven. And now, “Strike up !” shouted Koepkin to the fiddlers, and he sprang on to his feet. “He is my brother, Melchior is, and ’ware him who says him wrong !” They both laughed loud, and swore eternal friendship. It sorely grieved those who saw it; but it was Melchior’s way.

“Come, out with you, ladies, to the dance,” shouted the Ritter; “we will dance, brother Melchior.”

“Dance !” shouted the lad, with a great horse-laugh. To be sure, he little thought that the knight would dance with his great boots and spurs on, full of wine as he was, and indeed they both were so; but still it pleased him mightily.

“Whom will you dance with, brother Koepkin ?”

“With the fairest lady, to be sure; and you, too, brother Melchior, you shall dance with the fairest lady, too. I will dance with your bride, and you shall dance with thy bride. Let us see which is the fairest.”

The blood ran cold in Elizabeth's veins, as she saw Melchior come staggering towards her; but he seized her hand, and led her forwards. She made no resistance, indeed she had no power left to offer any—she went forward like a machine, and her look was like that of a corpse. Her eyes seemed half-glazed over, as she encountered the gaze of Koepkin. Melchior did not notice it.

“ This is she.”

“ That one !” said Koepkin.

“ Elizabeth Rathenow, my bride.”

“ She is not fair !—chalk and moonshine. That one yonder is fair. Who is she ?”

The blood flowed back once more into Elizabeth's cheeks, as the wretch said this, and she felt a power to move her limbs. She looked with pity on the young wife, Eva Brakow, now the object of Koepkin's hardened stare; and as the blood returned to Elizabeth's cheeks, so it left at once those of the blooming Eva; for which of the ladies there could wish to dance with Koepkin in the state he then was? The banquet at Thomas Wyna, came to the recollection of many, when the two had come once before in collision. To-day it was far otherwise—Elizabeth was now left standing, and Eva preferred before her; but no one envied her, and she herself, poor thing, stood trembling, a tear in either eye! But Melchior, her brother, snapped his fingers and laughed louder than ever.

“ That is my sister, brother Koepkin. Right good; dance with her. But where is my partner ?”

“Is not she here yet? A donner wetter on their nasty little ways! Has not Sadrach made an end yet of decking her out and dressing her?” And with that he stamped on the floor, and shouted, and swore at his people. They ran down, and before long there was a noise on the stairs, and the servants threw the doors wide open.

The Ritter Buffo now made his way to the different patricians, and a most singularly malicious grin he bore on his countenance, as he hinted to them confidentially that it would only be seemly for some of them to go to meet the lady and conduct her into the room; if they wished to gain Koepkin's favour they could not do it more certainly than by paying all attention to his lady, of whom he was very fond. Herr Dietrich Wynn darted off at once, and others followed, and very soon they appeared, leading the lady with them with all due ceremony.

It may be easily supposed that every eye was turned on the new comer. She was tall, and of a stately figure, her throat rose well from a full bosom, but there was rather too much, perhaps, of it displayed for so well ordered an entertainment; her head, also, was perhaps somewhat too much thrown back; her rosy cheeks looked like two apples rising on her fair white skin; her lips were as red as corals, and her eyes as black as coals; her nose was somewhat bent. How much Koepkin thought of her might readily be seen, for her heavy embroidered dress, made of the richest Venetian stuff, actually stood out with the

gold and silver that was on it. On her head she wore a cap of red velvet, almost a foot high, and hung round with a chain of pearls, whilst above it there peered a bunch of feathers of every colour, tall enough to sweep the ceiling almost. It was thus, then, that Herr Dietrich Wyns and one of the others led her into the room, one on either hand, whilst the trumpets blew, and the gentlemen bowed, and each lady in turn dropped a courtesy as she swept past them.

“That is my noble bride, Donna Salome of Hispania.”

For all this, there was a certain feeling of mistrust felt instinctively by nearly all, as the lady stood amongst them. Yet all were anxious to be presented to her, and Herr Dietrich Wyns presented first one, and then another, each saying something polite in their turns. Elizabeth was the only one who held back in a corner; she had no wish to be presented; she had a presentiment of something wrong.

They were now to dance, and as was meet and right, Koepkin gave preference to his lady, and she was to choose her partner. The Berlin people thought this strange, but Buffo whispered them that in Spain it was also the custom for noble ladies to choose their partners; so the lady, after reposing awhile, and looking round at all present, bid Herr Dietrich Wyns invite the senator Marcus Trebuss in her name. This caused general surprise, for Herr Trebuss was neither very young nor very gallant-looking; he was not even an ac-

complished dancer ; still one could see how much flattered he was as he approached with a most courtly air, bowing very low, and begging to kiss the lady's hand.

The dance commenced : Johannes Rathenow and his daughter sat together in a corner, when suddenly, as the pair went past them, Elizabeth started, and whispered into her father's ear, " Father, it is—it is she !"

" Who, my child ? You have not seen her before."

" No, father, it is she—I am sure it is she. Salome, who was our maid-servant."

Herr Trebuss had finished his dance, and stood, seemingly some inches higher than usual, his face beaming with joy—in truth, it was a rare occurrence for a senator of Berlin to dance with a Spanish countess. He was wiping his brow with his handkerchief, when Johannes took him a little to one side.

" Do you know who she is, Herr Trebuss ?"

" Who ? You mean the lady who has done me the honour to ——"

" She is Salome, the woman whom you flogged outside the Spandow gate. Look at her well."

Herr Trebuss started as if a bolt had hit him ; his hair stood on end. He turned to look at her, and there she stood smiling at him ; he recognised her, and would fain have sunk into the earth. And it passed from one to the other—a whisper, and every eye was once more turned to where she stood. The faces wore now a very different ex-

pression—it was a look of fear and disgust. Poor Herr Trebuss sat crouched into a corner, pale as a corpse, his hands clasped on his lap.

“Play away!” shouted Koepkin, “now for the bridal pair. Brother Melchior, lead my wife here, she will do you the honour to dance with you.”

But as Melchior advanced to claim her hand, his sister Eva rushed between them, and pushed him back.

“Melchior, what are you going to do?”

“I am going to dance,” he said.

“Oh, no, you mustn’t—Melchior, listen!”

“Give your hand, Eva, the knight—see.”

“Melchior! brother! it is——”

But ten voices shouted out, “Salome, Salome! she who was flogged by the senate—the nasty slut who ——”

Herr Garnekoser and another or two had by this time dragged Melchior back into a chair; and as for Bartholomew, the father, no one would have known him again; he stood before his son, with his fists doubled, thundering into his ear, “Melchior! dance will you? To bring shame on sister, bride, thy father, thy house, thy town! Spit on thy hand—she is a harlot, and you are your sister’s brother.”

“It is too much!” cried Eva, and the whole assembly shouted it in concert.

“Let us go out, let us go home!” cried mothers, fathers, and husbands.

“Who will go home?” shouted Koepkin. “Who

called for me? Here I am. Who invited me, and would leave their guest alone? Ye are proper hosts in Berlin."

Thomas Wyns placed himself before him with a deprecating look. "You, noble sir, are very welcome, and your presence does us infinite honour, only this Donna of Hispania was formerly ——"

Koepkin shouted, "What she was formerly matters to you not one rush! She is now my mistress—my bride, I mean. That is what she is when she is here, not otherwise, attend to that. And by the eleven thousand virgins, and ten dozen score more, I would like to see the burgess's son who dare fail to pay her respect!"

And with that he pushed Thomas Wyns violently back into a chair, and seizing Melchior by the doublet: "Dance with her, brother, or——"

It was plain to all that there was no mediation that could be of avail here. Thomas Wyns was a very good man, but not the one for a pinch like this. But no one expected what followed. Melchior sprang up as if a mad dog had bitten him. Foaming at the mouth, he rushed at Koepkin, and seizing by the throat, he hurled him from him with such violence, that had not a table been behind him, the knight must have measured his length on the floor. It would have been better, perhaps, had it been so.

"Brewer's boy! That to me!" yelled Koepkin; and his face grew dusky brown. A moment and he was on his feet, and his sword had rattled from its sheath. It was a fearful weapon, and he had

it in both hands. "Back, back!" cried some. "Draw, draw!" It was too late; Melchior lay upon the ground wallowing in his blood.

Oh, what an evening was that, and to be the termination to a festivity! Women lamenting and men storming! It was easy to be seen now who were the brave and who the timid. But what ensued could never be clearly told. The murderer and his band made their way towards the stairs, their swords above their heads. Old Bartholomew rushed after him with naked weapon—poor helpless old man! He would have been trodden under foot, for he was beside himself, had not Peter Brakow and one of the Hakenberg's held him back. And there he stood struggling with them, howling curses after the fugitives. There were plenty of avengers ready. One of Zarnekow's people was hurled headlong over the balustrades, and the others were besieged in the court-yard. The gates were thrown to, and they could not get out. The struggle was fearful. Think of such a scene by torch-light, for by this time it was dark.

And then the lamentation in the hall. Eva Brakow had flung herself down beside her brother. Elizabeth knelt on the other side like a statue, her hands clasped. Now and then she raised them above her head, and stared from under them, with her eyes fixed. The other women mourned aloud,

and sought to comfort by turns. Wretchedness and misery !

“ The bridge betwixt Koeln and Berlin is not to be ; Heaven wills it not ! ” said Garnekoser, slowly and low down, to Mathis Blankenfelde.

“ To-morrow, in the senate,” answered Mathis, in the same tone ; and they crept away.

The messengers ran hither and thither. Some went for the apothecary, others for the Dominican monks. None knew scarce what they did. Then came news that Koepkin’s band, in Cloister-street, were beating to arms. They had heard that their captain was a prisoner in the senate-house. Others said the prisoners were profiting by the confusion to break down the walls and escape ; and, above all the noise, Koepkin’s voice was to be heard yelling from inside the court-yard. He threatened to fire the town at the four corners if the gates were not opened. And, to all this, the screams of the women !

Johannes Rathenow was one equal to all this, but he stood alone. The few senators who yet remained were engaged with the women. If they spoke, their voices were drowned by screams, and prayers for succour. Poor Peter Brakow was worst off of all. His Eva was beside herself ; she tore her hair, and raved that she was her brother’s murderer. And then she raved against her husband, and the senate, and one and all. Herr Johannes had quite enough upon his hand with Bartholomew alone. The quiet phlegmatic

old man had altogether lost his reason. He cried for revenge, running first to one window and then to another, shouting to the people, they should not let the murderer escape, for his friends in the room resisted all his attempts to throw himself into the fray. He offered enormous sums of money for Koepkin's head. Then he would listen for a moment to Johannes, who represented to him the necessity of calling the heads of the guilds together, if they wanted to retain the assassin, and that the senators should be sent for. But then, just as he seemed about to act, or rather to let Johannes act, he would rush again to his dying son, tearing his hair and beating his breast, crying that the town might perish—he had lost his all.

“Father, how will this end?” said Elizabeth, throwing her arms round her father, for a light as of flames reflected the window-panes on the ceiling, and a noise of shouting began to be heard from the direction of the George's-gate. At that moment the gates underneath were burst open, with a shock which made the whole tremble. Koepkin and his crew rushed through the shattered gate, and a cry arose—“Storm!—fire!—Berlin burns!”

“Ring the alarm bells!” shouted Johannes from the window. “The alarm bells, ye citizens!” shouted the few who stood behind him. They had wished it before, but he had kept them back. He now shouted it himself. “But, God have mercy

upon us!" he said to himself, low down, "if the enemy outside the walls take advantage of it."

"It cannot be worse than it is!" said Thomas Wyns.

"The Koeln people are shutting themselves in," cried a voice up to the window. "They are barricading the bridge, lest Koepkin come over to them."

"And us they leave in the lurch!" cried Brakow, in despair.

"There was but that wanting," said Johannes, throwing himself back on a chair: "We strangle our right with our own hands."

Just then, above the noise, was heard a loud blast of trumpets. From the side of the Long Bridge there came a sound of horses feet, and a full clear voice shouted, "Steady, steady, good citizens! Make head there against the murdering villains! Back with them yonder; your strength is in the narrow streets."

And out of a thousand throats arose a shout as of one man: "Henning!—Henning is here again!"

"God be thanked, he is!" shouted the voice again. "So forward, good friends, all together. The Koelnerns are marching on; they are not shutting themselves in."

"Father, dearest father," cried Elizabeth, "all will be well yet!"

He pressed the girl to his bosom. Koepkin's voice was heard only once again. It was drowned

in the shouts of the citizens, and the clashing of arms.

"I come a herald from the Kurprince," said the young knight, as, after some time he entered the hall. "He bids me say——"

"To whom!" interrupted Johannes, advancing to meet him.

"To the burgomaster and senate of both towns."

"Then let the herald of the Mark-graf be silent here," answered the burgomaster. "This was e'en now the abode of joy, it is now the scene of murder and of blood! To-morrow, in the senate, at the proper time, in presence of the assembled council, we will hear what the Mark-graf bids us know. Into their presence I bid his messenger come. It is not seemly that one or more aldermen should listen to what the Prince would say to the senate of the united towns. Early in the morning, sir knight, the burgomaster will expect you before the senate."

And he made a sign to Thomas Wyns, that he should see the herald properly entertained at the cost of the towns. That evening he held no converse with him.

It was a sorrowful evening. Koepkin's band were driven back into their own quarters without much shedding of blood, but in the senate-house there lay one in his death-throes. It was not possible to bear him to his house in Koeln. The monks received his last confession in a small room adjoining the council-chamber, and per-

formed the last ceremony for the dying. His family remained by the corpse all night, and Herr Bartholomew vowed to endow a lamp, to be kept constantly burning for the welfare of his soul, in the cloister of the Black Friars.

CHAPTER XV.

DISMAL and sad were the days that followed. When thorough ruin comes, one knows the worst ; but to see its daily approach, this to-day and that to-morrow, it is this that bears down the spirit. Had the Kurprince stormed the walls, each would have known what he had to expect. "Woe to the city taken by storm !" is a saying to be found full often in the history of the world.

But it was not so. Conquered they were not, though they could hold out no longer. In dragging their single heavy gun across the bridge, its pillars had given way. The hearse, bearing Melchior's body, was forced to wait in Berlin till the carpenters had made it temporarily good again. "It has lasted its time out !" said they, one to another. The Berlin people accused the Koelnern of having shut themselves up when Koepkin's party were raging in Berlin. The Koelnern had their com-

plaints too. There was distrust on either side. Koepkin was shut up in the palace; the fire which he had kindled, had, through the mercy of God, been got under. He was actually besieged; for what else can you call it, when the citizens lay night and day before the house, letting no one either in or out. Oh, what bitter talk there was in every house and tavern! "The common weal might well perish," they said, "whilst open enemies were in the town itself. What sort of a senate was it that could enlist allies, who had to be watched lest they should break out? The whole town was distracted. The women went about asking what was to be the end of it all. If the men were to stand and watch day and night, how were they to get their living? The market prices were already enormously high. A senator could not pass along the streets without being followed by a crowd and shouted after. It was no ways pleasant what they said to him, and he had little that was pleasant to say in return.

Then there was the usual sitting of the council. Few attended it, and little was said. Everything seemed already determined on. Niclas Pernewitz had arrived the night before, and others from Frankfort, Prenzlau, and Spandow, and some of still higher rank. The Mark-graf's message was to be laid first before the senate, and yet they all seemed to know what it was beforehand. Of all that ascended the stairs, there was no one who felt more miserable than Johannes Rathenow. Peter Brakow walked at his side.

"If Bartholomew does not come, whom have I to depend upon?" said Johannes, mournfully.

"He is an altered man," answered Brakow; "he sits in a corner, weeping, asking himself why he acquired his wealth, and why his fathers before him were so saving. It is heart-breaking, Herr Johannes, to see him and hear him."

"He should come, and speak like a man. Though his son be lost to him, his town still remains."

Brakow shook his head: "He thinks of nothing but the lamp which he is about to endow. It seems to be his only anxiety, that the Mark-graf may give it his sanction."*

"The Mark-graf will soon put that business aside," murmured Herr Johannes. "Koeln, for a lamp that is not to go out. If the best of us fail thus, what is there to be done!"

The chronicles say little of the last session of the united towns, Berlin and Koeln; only that, when the bearer of the Prince's message was about to be admitted, the burgomaster rose, and said—

"Sirs, this is out of order, and as long as I am your burgomaster, everything shall be conducted as was ordained by our fathers before us. The first minute for to-day's consideration is the application of the shoemakers' guild, in the matter of the hides brought to market."

There were many who thought that it was not

* An actual case. The lamp burnt to the time of the Reformation.

right that a matter of such little moment should take precedence ; but others justified it. The shoemakers of both towns may ever thank Johannes Rathenow, for it was the last statute that the town in its authority enacted ; and who knows if they would have carried their point in another senate ? It was, that any skins brought to market were first to be at the refusal of the free guild of shoemakers, before a citizen or a stranger could have a right to buy them up.

Konrad Ryke opposed it. The shoemakers had privileges enough ; and much he said to the effect that one guild was not to be favoured to the prejudice of another. Johannes Rathenow supported it, for it had all along been understood to be so, though not set down in writing. He spoke powerfully in defence of ancient rights—that there would be nothing to adhere to, were they neglected. It was carried, leaving Konrad Ryke by himself. Nevertheless, he carried it afterwards, that calfskins, sheep and pig skins might be free to be bought by any one.*

“ Must it then be so ? ” said Herr Johannes, as the messengers, and others who had attended voluntarily, left the assembly. He rose up, and clasped his hands. Tilly von Bruck collected the suffrages.

Konrad Ryke put his arm within Johannes'. He said, in a hollow tone, “ So it must be, Johannes ! ”

* Statute of April 8th, 1448.

“Unanimous?”

“Unanimous,” answered Konrad.

“Then Konrad Ryke, also?”

“If the tree break, can one bough avail?”

The strangers were again admitted. There were many of noble lineage and high fame. Besides the burgomasters of Frankfort and Prenzlau, there were the most reverend the Bishop Stephanus, from Brandenburg, Prince Adolph of Anhalt, the Lord of Ruppin, and Nickel Tirbach, the head of the order of St. John. They said much to the comfort of the senators—that the Mark-graf would be their good friend, if, instead of delaying longer, they should shew a ready disposition to do his will.

Niclas Pernewitz, as a neighbour, was very ready with his good advice; but they listened to him least of any. The matter of the building of the castle had lost him their confidence; it seemed to them as if all he wanted was to go on with his contract. He had to hold his tongue, for he got unpleasant replies. The Duke of Anhalt reminded them of former times, when his cousins had reigned over the Mark. It was so no more, and it behoved every one to bow to circumstances. The Bishop of Brandenburg would have gone on in the same strain, only the senators said they knew all that already, without telling. What Nickel Tirbach said to them was not exactly comforting, but he meant it well: “All things in the world,” said he, “have a beginning and an end. Behold the Temple-court on the mound yonder! Once the pagans had it—

it was an idol temple. When our ancestors had driven them forth, the Knights of the Temple chose it for their preceptory. Already a hundred years are passed over since they were hunted forth, and their companions in other parts of the world slain and burnt. We, of St. John's, next took possession, and held it until we sold it and the surrounding territory to you of the senate; and now the Mark-graf has laid his hand upon it. See, then, the vicissitudes of all earthly things. Yet yours will it be again, if so be that you submit yourselves patiently to his commands, and do as he would have you do.

It took some days to furnish the missive in proper form. In it the patricians were to declare, "That on account, and by reason of the differences which had existed between the two towns, they, the burgesses and inhabitants, had made terms with the Mark-graf." A hundred objections were made by those who signed it, and two would not sign it at all. The two were Johannes Rathenow and Konrad Ryke. The first of these had thrown a covering over the burgomaster's chair, and had taken himself away. He would go into the senate-house no more.

The receipt of this document created great surprise at Spandow. The Mark-graf had not expected it; he knew the pride of the patricians. "Their pride has left them," said the Ritter Buffo, who, together with the rest, had been set at liberty; "since their dance with the fine lady, their crests are a little lowered. That is the sole cause, your highness, of this ready submission."

“The ways of the Lord are past finding out!” said the Kurprince. The Princess was not so moderate; she was impatient of the trick that had been played them.

“Is Koepkin to escape punishment for such shameless deeds?” she asked. “Though the men have done you wrong, what have the wives and maidens done to be exposed to such dreadful insult?”

The Mark-graf answered, “If the Prince must chastise all who transgress, he will need a hundred arms, and they will not suffice. But ask of the Ritters who were there present. It was for them to avenge an insult perpetrated against virtuous ladies.”

Her highness turned to the Ritter Buffo: “You were there?”

“Only as a prisoner, your highness; had I had a sword, and known that the burgess’s wives enjoyed such high protection, I would willingly have shed my heart’s blood in their quarrel.”

The Princess turned haughtily away from him. To her it seemed that with or without a sword, it was a Ritter’s duty to protect a lady’s honour; and that evening, in her own cabinet, she struck out the name of the Ritter Buffo Voss from amongst those who seemed worthy to wear the order of the Swan.

Koepkin Zarnekow went for that time unpunished; the Berlin people were glad enough, after much negotiation, to let him and his fellows depart. It would have been one trouble too many

to have had to continue to keep guard over him ; he even got a good round sum of money to take with him—such was the helpless condition of the citizens. It would have been better had they now followed good advice, and submitted unreservedly. They had released their prisoners ; the Mark-graf had done the same. He also had restored them their villages ; but further than that, they hung back from performing. It is the way with mankind ; before, when they were in a position to defend themselves, or, at any rate, to gain good conditions, they would give everything up, and surrender every right at a stroke ; now that it was too late, they behaved just like children, retaining one thing after another till it was taken from them. Had they pulled down their woodwork fortification, which was no longer of any use to them, and put the wall again in the condition they found it ; had they allowed the slate and stone to pass for the building of the Prince's castle, it might have done much to conciliate him. They did nothing of the sort, they let the fortification stand, and even delighted childishly in the thought how it would vex the Mark-graf. They busied themselves instead—that is, the families, among one another, quarrelling about who had given Salome a hand, or paid their respects to her. Yes, they actually held a sort of council, as to whether poor Marcus Trebuss, who had danced with her, should be received into their society again.

One would have thought that, in a troublous time like that, the citizens would have held firm

together. When the storm blows, the twig bends before it; when wolves howl, horses group together, and keep their heads close to one another's. Misfortune, however, too often separates those who could bear it better, did they but stand by one another. In ancient histories, we read of Jerusalem and other towns, where the parties raged inside when the enemy was raging outside. They did not actually slay one another in Berlin or Keeln, nor did they poison the wells, but their tongues scattered poison. Each would accuse the other of being the cause of their misfortunes, and each could see the mote in his brother's eye, not seeing the beam that was in his own. Meanwhile, the common people shouted more loudly than ever, "Why was it not left as it was anno forty-two, when the Mark-graf settled everything for us? Of what avail has been our money, our labour, and our blood? He seizes upon our goods, his castle is to be built as it is, and now our senate is to be taken away, and our law-courts, our mills, and our right of bonding." That was not half what they said. The patricians had yet more to complain of: they not only lost their authority, but were cited to appear at Spandow, one and all, to surrender their charters and privileges, which a decree declared forfeited, and also to pay a fine. Yet, with all this, family must still strive against family, looking at each other askance, and holding no friendly intercourse.

What was said against the Rathenows in the

house of the Schumms may well be supposed. Bartholomew would not see Johannes, Eva boiled over whenever the name was mentioned, and even the mild Peter Brakow scarcely greeted Johannes when he met him in the street. Evil tongues had done this, because Henning Mollner had been seen again in the burgomaster's house. It had all been made up before they said. Henning was to appear at the wedding, and Elizabeth to faint away. It but lacked that they should have put Henning behind Koepkin when he slew Melchior. Even the cooler amongst them thought it not right that Elizabeth should have aught to say to Henning,—she who had almost been Melchior's bride, though she would have been so against her will. Johannes was too proud to offer a word in explanation; a more worthy reason for complaint had seated itself in his mind, and he was very angry with the Schumms for having failed him in the senate.

One evening the rolling of the drum was heard in the direction of the Spandow gate; the Markgraf's troops were marching in, and all ran out to see. Johannes stepped out of his closet to look through the window of another room. He found his daughter Elizabeth there, and beside her, on a stool, sat the Ritter Henning. His hand had taken hers, and she had let it be so. Both started, when her father entered, and, as it would have seemed, would have drawn back their hands; but no, they clasped each other more closely, and

both met his eye. It was a trusting look, and in the eyes of both there were the same things written.

The father understood it well; his look was also sympathizing, and it was a mournful sympathy. But he motioned them apart, though from his lips fell at the same moment the words, "My beloved children!"

They both answered at once, "Father!"

"Can an old man, who has lost everything, have yet strength enough to give pain to others? one who has no more of himself refuse happiness to others? It is marvellous and sad alike; but it is so, children. Be not angry with me, sir; it is you who are right, it was I who was wrong when I fostered your hopes——. Stay, dear Henning, all that you would say I say to myself—you have made yourself worthy to take home the daughter of a Rathenow. Perhaps—there are strange things in the world—once the noble was born, now he can be made. May they be able to make everything anew, and different to what it is; it is for them to do, not for such as I, who am hurrying to my grave. But—but—yes—well—it cannot be."

"Dear sir—dear father!" cried the young knight, "you said even now I was worthy of the fair Elizabeth! Thanks, thanks to you for that. Oh! say no more to-day, time will bring about the rest. The grass must grow first over the memory of the departed bridegroom; but then,

you know, flowers grow above the grass, and garlands ——”

The old man shook his head; he pointed to the threshold: “Johannes Rathenow never failed in his word. Do you remember, sir, the day you fled away, that word said, until Roland springs from his pedestal, and traverses the town! Poor, poor boy, it is my word—I have naught else—I am a poor man—my word is heavy, nor Mark-graf, nor Emperor, nor torture can remove it.”

“Father!” cried Elizabeth, and seizing his hand, she covered it with burning kisses.

“Be patient, children. When the stone presses thy father’s bones, Elizabeth, his word will be buried with him.”

“There is no need to wait as long as that,” was heard from old Gertrude’s lips. With the look of a maniac, she rushed to the window, and flung it open; gleams of torch-light shone into the room, and underneath there was a low murmur as of many people, and a tread of many feet. As they approached the window, other noises arose.

“What is it?” cried Henning.

“The anger of the Mark-graf,” answered the burgomaster, folding himself in his mantle. That day he spoke not a word more, he stood motionless, watching the work to the end.

The light of the torches shewed pikes, and picks, and heavy axes. They were hammering away at the statue of Roland.

“In the name of the Mark-graf, our most gracious lord and master, the Kurprince Frederick the other,” cried a herald to the assembled crowds, “in his name we take this Roland from hence, as the symbol of the right of judicature which formerly was the right of this town, but which is so no longer. This is his will and ordinance.”

As it fell, and the stone was much decayed, a sound of wailing arose into the air. One voice alone screamed a scream of joy; it came from the house of the Rathenows; it was the voice of old Gertrude. No one took offence at it, for she had been half insane since the patricians had executed her husband, Martinus Wardenberg, in the new market, for breach of peace against the towns. Ever since then she had constantly foretold that the statue of Roland would fall, and the town lose its judicature. She spoke a few more wonderful words, and fell then into a fever. The next day she died, and few but prayed for peace to her soul.

The fragments of the statue were loaded on to sledges, and borne along the streets by the light of torches to the Long Bridge, when they were thrown into the Spree.

Since then there has been no Roland in Berlin. The citizens themselves had forgotten that there had been one, but it was found in the records. The taking of it away was ordered by the Kurprince, because they had not pulled down the wooden

fortification which they had built upon his wall, but let it stand in ridicule of his authority. In other towns, from which he also took the courts of judgment, he left the Roland standing, that one might see what the town had been. Thus we see one to-day in Brandenburg, in the front of the senate-house.

CHAPTER XVI.

AND now came days sadder than all for the proud patricians of Koeln and Berlin. A few might be seen taking their way together across the marshy hollows where now the Thiergarten stands, towards Lutzow; here they were to leave horses and attendants, and go forward on foot to the citadel of Spandow. There were no exceptions made. It lasted many weeks, and how often had they to stand waiting before the gates would be opened to them, just as they had once made people wait before their gates. Everything in this world is given to change, and truly its glory passeth away. In a little room over the gatehouse sat Frederick Sesselman, now the chancellor, Peter Knobelsdorf, the Vogt of Spandow, and one or two others; they seemed weary with much writing. Knobelsdorf read over the names of the patricians who had already passed the ordeal, and the fine that each had had set against his name. Each was to pay

more or less, as the law courts had decided. "Who would have thought that the citizens of two towns should have so much money?" he added.

"Should have *had* so much?" replied one of the others. "This will be their ruin—they will not lift up their head again for centuries."

"It is their desert," said Knoblesdorf.

The chancellor rocked his head to and fro. "It is still a melancholy thing," he said. "Such thriving towns to become at once the abodes of poverty! But yet, sirs, I think it will yet be otherwise; the Mark-graf is sorely displeased, but he is still merciful. If it was not his intention to shew grace, why is he building his princely residence on the shores of the Spree? Why not build it here, where the Spree mingles its waters with the fruitful Havel? Why not at Brandenburg, a town which has shewn itself ever pliable and submissive? A prince such as he is will surely not love to dwell amongst those whom his anger has trodden under foot. My opinion is, that he loves them yet, though he chastises them. They were the towns which were his father's first firm stepping stones in this land, and service such as that a Hohenzoller never forgets."

"God preserve me from show of affection like this!" remarked the Vogt of Spandow: and with that they admitted those who were waiting outside. These were Thomas Wyns, with his three sons, (Hans, Valentine, and Martyn,) Hans Plumperdum, and Johannes Rathenow. They had to remain

standing whilst their sentence was read to them—alas! they knew it all before. All their lands which they held of the Mark-graf, as well as of any one else—prelates, nobles, or the towns, were to be surrendered to the mercy of the Prince; and their property, even to the portions of their wives. Each was to give in a written statement of all he possessed, as well in property as in outstanding debts owing to him, with a declaration that according to what the Prince willed him to do or to give, that he was willing and ready to do. And after their “body and goods were thereby placed at the disposal of his gracious highness,” the chancellor read to each his sentence. Thomas Wyny was to pay two thousand guilders, (Konrad Ryke and Peter Brakow had had each to pay three thousand;) Hans Plumperdum was to pay seven hundred, and also to give an acquittal of a debt which the Mark-graf owed him; Johannes Rathenow was to pay seven hundred guilders, but his wife’s portion was not touched, this he was to make over to his daughter. And besides that, they were forbidden, all except Johannes Rathenow, to live in any of the four principal towns of the Mark, as well as at Spandow, and to depart from Berlin between then and Martinmas. Then the following oath was dictated to them, and they were to swear it:—

“We hereby swear, before God and his holy saints, that we will never again, either by word or deed, do, transact, or cause to be done, or transacted, any thing to the prejudice of our gracious lord and master the Mark-graf Frederick, his heirs,

or successors; that we will also give information to his highness, his heirs, or successors, of any thing that we see, hear of, or come to the knowledge of, against his said highness, his heirs, or successors, but, on the contrary, we will cause such to be made known without any delay; and we hereby pledge ourselves to be, and remain henceforth, faithful and loyal subjects of his highness, his heirs, and successors,—so help us God and his holy saints.”

Thomas Wyns, with his sons, and Hans Plumperdum, took the oath without hesitation. Johannes Rathenow stood awhile considering; he then approached the table, and said, “I will take the oath.” The chancellor seemed right well pleased, and as they were all about to depart, he motioned to Johannes, and bade him enter a door, which led into an adjoining apartment. He went in, thinking the chancellor had something more to say to him; the door, however, was closed behind him. On going forward, he became aware of the presence of another person, reclining in an arm-chair reading. After a while, he looked up—it was the Mark-graf.

“Ah, see! Johannes,” he said, “what would you here?”

“Your highness!” answered Johannes, stepping back a pace, and bowing low. “May I make bold to ask your highness what I am here to do?”

The Prince looked at him awhile with an inquiring look. “It is seemly that the offender come into the presence of his lord, and not that

the lord go to the offender to ask somewhat? You come to ask somewhat?"

"It was not for that that I was bidden to Spandow."

"You had nought to do with that wood work?" suggested the Prince hastily, as if he had not listened.

"I did that which in me lay, seeing that the town wall was broken, and the enemy before the gate, to provide that which might be a defence against him."

"What enemy? Had you a quarrel with the Pole, or with them of Magdeburg? My nobles trouble you no longer."

"Your highness, we were in arms for our rights, and we had a right, therefore, to do whatever we could in their defence, for in war——"

"Enough, enough!" interrupted the Prince; "but you were not one who let the thing stand when the treaty was already entered into—you were not one who stubbornly bade it stand in scorn of my power after I had bade it be removed?"

"Sir, I was not, for on that day I ceased to be burgomaster, nor did I enter the senate again which was a senate no longer."

"I knew it. You are not one of those stubborn head-strong madmen. You have sworn the oath without hesitation, Johannes—it pleases me."

"I have sworn it," said Rathenow, with a sigh. "I am an old man, and tired of life; my days are well nigh numbered, and I earnestly desire repose."

“ Had you been young, you had not sworn it ? ”

“ I know not, sir. Forgive me. That which is ‘ the right ’ is so doubtful that one can hardly know what it is ; a man should not, therefore, encumber his way with thinking of what might be—it were to deprive him of much of which he could make better use.”

“ You have spoken prudently and well, Johannes. It is the duty of a man, in difficult times like these, to take things as they come ; if he looks steadfastly before him, he will not do wrong.”

The Mark-graf stood up, and took two or three turns along the room. He then again commenced.

“ You, Hans Rathenow, were the man who was not content when my archives were broken open—it was you who respected my private papers ; I am indebted to you for it, and shall never forget it. I therefore forgive you all that you have done against me ; your deeds shall be sunk in the sea, even as your Roland was sunk, not to rise again. Are you content therewith ? ”

“ Sir, no ! ” The words came from the very bottom of his breast.

The Mark-graf looked at him with astonishment.

“ God have mercy on me, sir ! I do not thank you that I must forget what in my long life I have done ; that, sir, would be a boon to a wicked man, and I—I think I have not done wickedly. I thought to lay my head in the grave with honour, but then, I must shame me of my grey hairs. No, I would not forget that which I have done and spoken.”

“ And that you were a rebel against your lord ? ”

“ Your Grace, I was no rebel.”

“ All that you did before your exile is forgiven. I know that wicked tongues belied you. You intended well, and you acted as you thought was right. The appearance only was against you ; and if you were wanting in anything, you atoned for it in exile. But you returned again into the revolted town, you strengthened it in its insurrection, you spoke against your Mark-graf in the senate, you bade the burgesses take arms, you called on nobles, and princes, and towns, to draw the sword against me. You yourself put on harness, and mounted the walls in defiance of your liege lord. Was that no rebellion ? ”

“ No, sir ; it was my duty.”

“ Am I your lord ? ”

“ I owe you fealty, inasmuch as I hold lands of you. If I have forfeited them, by being true to my towns, you have received them again from your vassal. The judgment has been passed, and we are quit.”

“ And were you not my subject as a burgess of this land ? ”

“ I was burgess of my town, and subject to my town, as you are lord of the land, but not of my town.”

“ Does, then, Berlin lie somewhere on the Danube ? ”

“ The town was its own master, and free. So it stands, written and sealed, in the ancient records, recognised as such by mark-grafs and princes. We

had right of coining, bonding, and our own courts of criminal law. All that, and much more, was ours, just as were our houses and our walls. The lords of the land had nothing but the territorial jurisdiction, and aids in time of war. Have we resisted your rights? We gave you all that was yours, and did but guard for ourselves what was ours. This freedom, and these ancient privileges, you attacked, sir, and we defended. Which of us, then, was in the right?"

"These rights of yours had been gained by stealth, had been forced from the princes of former times. You had assumed what was not yours, and had made yourselves rich at the expense of all others. True the princes before us founded your towns, but not that they should be set at defiance by them, rather that they should be store-houses for arms, and seats of commerce, open to them at all times, and subject to them. But, like bad stewards, you had taken possession of your master's lands, and cared for yourselves, while all the surrounding country suffered."

"I have always heard it said, your Grace, that the land is rich when its town is rich, and that the country cannot be suffering when its towns are doing well. Nor did we get what we possessed by stealth. The ancient princes either gave us what we had willingly, or we bought it with hard money. And who is there now to pay it back again to their grand-children? But we wish not for it. For what merchant can force the buyer, after a lapse of years, to restore him the article he bought, or close the

transaction by buying it anew? It were idle litigation. We held it, sir, two hundred years in peace—unassailed. That is our right which you now take from us.”

“You wilful man,” said the Mark-graf, again sitting down, “would you that I send for my council, or for Olearius, to prove to you according to Roman law, that the rights you claim, and which were originally the rights of the lord of the land, never can be lost by lapse of time?”

“Your highness, it would be useless: I do not understand Roman.”

“And, for myself, I would rather speak German with you.”

“If, your highness, one should go back in cases of disputed right to what has been, to what once was, then nothing would be a right. What can you call yours, or I mine? The Vandals owned this land before us, and they say we have no right to the soil. Where is the court that will listen to them? It would cause useless confusion in the world should one go to what was before. In order to stand fast, it is for us to keep firm hold of that which we have. It is that which is the right.”

“You are stubborn, Johannes. What provision would there be for future times, did everything remain stationary? Every man has a duty to perform in providing for his children; for the numbers increase daily, and, did the provision remain but the same, on what could they live? And, just as the father must care for his successors, so has the

prince yet heavier cares. The people in his land are all his children, and they increase ever. It is for him to take care that more land be cultivated, that trade find new outlets, that the superfluity be taken away, and that that be brought in which his country stands in need of. The prince's charge is a heavy one, and he must render account of his stewardship to God. He must see that the few do not hoard for themselves, that they do not possess the highways, or dam the rivers, or build the ground within walls. No; each one must work for the public good. He that does not do it is a useless member of society, and must be got rid of. Your towns, being as they were, were just such useless branches, sucking up the rain and dew like a sponge, meanwhile the land was thirsty. It mattered not to you; but to me it does matter. I am the lord and ruler; and my right it is to see that justice is done to all, and not to one alone."

Johannes was a moment silent. "Where is that right written, sir?" he asked. "I have not read it in any of the statutes."

The Mark-graf sprang up. "It is written on the arch of heaven, it is written in the stars, it is written in my breast. It is the undying right of princes."

"My eyes are too weak, sir, to read the writing in the stars. I know those rights only, which are written in the statutes, and known by all, such as the sheriffs can refer to when they sit in council."

"Do you call such rights eternal?"

“ Properly, sir—yes. But what is not right often happens. The strong man strikes down the weak. But might is never right.”

“ Think you so ? I say the contrary. If we turn back the pages of the world’s history, we find that every kingdom, and every right has been founded on might. It was in that way that Philip and Alexander gained Asia and Greece, Julius Cæsar founded the Roman Empire, and Charlemagne the German. They stood before no bench of sheriffs. Their right was good before God, and he substantiated it. It was might that became right, and Cæsar became a Kaiser, and the Emperor’s right is that by which we all are judged. Trust me, Johannes, thy right is a small right—it is good for little things. There is a greater right than thine, and, when it will, thy right must bow to it. It is the will of God. No wise man will resist it. And we princes are the maintainers of this right, to whom God has given clearer knowledge. We are as the gardeners, who look round their garden, and see that all is blooming and bearing fruit, whilst they tear up the withered shrub, and break off the rotten branch. These, too, might say, we were formerly planted, and have bloomed, and been green so long, that we have a right to stay here, as the others have. It is not so ; for they occupy the place where others might flourish ; and the young sucklings have more right than they. Well, Johannes, is the gardener’s right good ? ”

“ My gracious Prince, the gardener may do right in the sight of God, who has placed him over the

garden. But yet the bough that withers has still a claim, only it has not where to make its appeal. But why question me? I am grey and withered, like the plant which will be no more green, nor give forth blossom, nor bear fruit."

"Johannes," said the Prince, in a friendly tone of voice, "you are a well-meaning man, and a good citizen of your town, and one who loves his fatherland. You have a daughter whom you are about to give to a brave knight. Well, then, would you not like to live to see their happiness, and the happiness of those who follow them? Would you plant them in a desert? And are these lands otherwise than a desert? Count the villages which once flourished, and are now laid waste. Count the marches, the heaths, which once were fruitful lands, under the hand of the labourer. Trace the highways, and number the robber bands who look for their prey. My father did much, and something I have done, but my successors will have to do still more. But, though we have a thousand arms, we can do little, if the country does not confide in us, and help us. This land may once again be fair and mighty, as it was in olden time; but if each stands alone, and shuts his door, demanding only his private right, how can any general good be accomplished? Only by the sacrifice of private interest can anything great be won for the common weal. See, then, I will make this now despised land once again mighty. Villages and towns shall flourish once more. The castle and the cloister, all shall know order and rest. I

will gain peace for it, both from within and from without, till its strength shall awe the Madgeburger, and discourage the Pole. It is my will that the wanderer take his way through the thickest forest secure as in your peopled streets—that the tradesman in his booth lay his head as confidently to rest as does the Lord of Ruppín in his turreted castle. It was for this that my father bridled the nobles; for this I restrain the towns, which yet I love. You are a well meaning man, Johannes; would you not like to see the Mark happy?”

“Sir, my heart rejoices when I see the clouds fading away in the evening light; but yet I choose rather to return under my own humble roof. The wind may blow the clouds away, but still they will shed their rain. But I know what my roof will keep out, my fathers built it.”

Again the Prince took one or two hasty turns along the room. “Johannes,” he said, “I mean well, but I stand in need of virtuous men to help and assist me. By God, I stand here alone. Those I dare trust have not the comprehension, and those who have the wit I dare not trust. You I have not banished from the towns as I have the others. You will remain, and, in remaining true to the oath you have taken, you will know how to do the best for your towns and your prince.”

Johannes Rathenow raised himself up slowly. “Is it your gracious highness’ intention to ratify our statutes, and affix your seal to our charters of privilege.”

“No!” cried the Kurprince, and his eye lighted with displeasure. “I will rend in my anger the seals from your parchments, in sign that your privileges are forfeited. On your submission it must depend what rights I still grant you, out of the overflowing of my graciousness.”

Johannes bowed him low, and then he asked: “Has your highness anything more to command?”

“You will not be my friend, Johannes—my enemy you will also not be, for you have sworn it. What, then, will you do?”

“I will take the pilgrim’s staff into my hand, sir, and turn my back upon my town, which once was free. In other lands I will seek a refuge, where I can die a free man. My back is too old to learn to bend. Johannes Rathenow, who has been seventy years a free burgess, can not live one year the subject of a prince.”

“Stubborn fool! And if I bar your exit——”

“That you have no right to do, sir. The fealty I owe you, you yourself have taken away. I am not chained to the sod. I am a free German man, the son of men as free, in the Saxon forests, as were your fathers in the Franconian hills.”

“And who will profit by your obstinacy? Your children——”

“They will remain. They will make their own peace with you.”

“And what, then, do you take with you into exile?”

“My rights, sir.”

When the chancellor, Herr Freiderich Sesselman, asked the Prince, soon after: "Whom, then, will you now ordain to be burgomaster in Berlin?" he answered, "Balzer Boytin."

The chancellor started. "That bad man! Your grace, it is not well——"

"Certainly it is not well. But when good men desert us, it is for us to make use of bad men. That is the curse of princes."

CHAPTER XVII.

TWENTY and two years after what we have related in the foregoing chapter—it was in the year of our Lord 1470—a party of horsemen might have been seen taking their way from the Mark, towards the frontier of Lusatia. It was a noiseless train; they were not many, but all fully armed, and escorted by a sufficient number of attendants. They journeyed towards no tournament, nor high festivity, nor yet to the war; no banners waved above their heads, no gay plumes streamed from their helmets, no trumpeters blew merry notes as they went along; nor was it a hunting train, for they rode slowly, and the sumpter horses were heavy laden. It was a removal, but evidently of a distinguished personage, and he rode in the midst of the party, with his body bent, and a seriousness and sadness resting on his wan and pallid countenance. The nearer they approached the frontier, the more slowly he rode, and now and then he turned him-

self round, to gaze once again on the country he was leaving.

The distinguished personage was Kurprince Frederick the Other. He was tired of bearing rule. His lady had departed from his side, and his sons were gone to the grave before him. He had resigned his principedom and his sceptre into the hands of his brother of Franconia, the Burg-graf Albrecht Achilles, and now he bent his way from the cold, damp land which had been his, to the sun-lit valleys of Franconia. It was there he wished to die. He who leaves for the last time the land of his sojourn, may well give way to grief. Thirty years he had held sway there, yet known but little joy. Much had he done, and suffered much, yet where was the fruit? The bells rang not for him, no flowers were strewed in his path, few followed him weeping, bidding him a tender adieu. The air was cold and damp; the crows hovered croaking over the pine-trees. Few of his court accompanied him. His intention had ever been good—how many acknowledged it? The villagers asked each other, “Who is that?” “It is the old Mark-graf; he is going away.” “Why is he going away?” “Because it is too cold for him here.”

On their way, they came to an inn on the roadside, where many heavily-laden travelling waggons were standing. The waggoners were in great anxiety, and looked out timidly as the company drew near. When they heard, however, who it

was, some of them went to meet him, to ask if it really was the Kurprince; and then they made known to him that they were on their way to Saxony with skins and salted fish, but that further on there were some knights watching for them. They prayed, therefore, that the Kurprince would allow them to travel in his company, as they were not sufficiently numerous to defend themselves. The captain of the troop—and it was no other than the Ritter Wedigo Luederitz—was not disposed to accede to it. It was not the Prince's business, he said, and the heavy waggons could not travel as fast as the Prince wished to do.

“Who is watching for you?” asked the Kurprince.

“Your grace, Buffo Voss, and some others with him.”

Wedigo and many others let their eyes fall to the ground on hearing this. The Kurprince, however, shewed no surprise; he merely said, “*Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurrit.*”

A few wanted to persuade the waggoners they must be mistaken. The Kurprince, however, bade them be silent.

“I know you all,” he said. “Were I not with you, and your honour at stake, ye would rather be with Buffo than journeying now with me.”

Wedigo laid his hand on his heart: “Your highness, I——”

“You, even as the others. I am willing to believe you are improved, and mean well; but

your nature is against you. Like the hound which runs into the wood when its master does not call it to his side, just so would you take to the highway. This Buffo!—holy saints! a man with a grey head, and more than sixty, and one who, in truth, stands in no need. Peace! I know how he once stood related to you. Me he has not deceived; yet he was a man of wit and good parts. I hoped, by putting honours upon him, and having him near my person, to lead him into a better way; but a man's nature is not to be changed. As soon as the master turns his back, the old humours break out. Well, a few paces further, and I trouble you no more."

"Oh, your highness, there are thousands who bewail your determination!"

"I believe it well. My brother Albrecht is my successor. I had but iron teeth, he is of iron nerve and limb. He will go otherwise to work," he murmured to himself, "and yet will fail."

And with that the Prince nodded to the waggons to accompany him: "I do one more good service," he said, with a melancholy smile, "and one or two will thank me for it."

Soon afterwards, as they came near the old ruins of Kikhoevel, they noticed two small hillocks.

"Those will very likely be burial-places of the Huns," remarked the Prince.

"I rather think not," said one of the others, "they seem too small."

"And on one of them there is a ruined cross,"

remarked Wedigo. "There has been one on the other, only it seems to have fallen; therefore they will have been good Christians."

As they were speaking, they perceived a party of horsemen, five or six, riding quick towards them. At first they beheld them with anxiety, and gathering round the Prince, the knights laid their hands on the hilts of their swords; but the prince, who was looking attentively, said, "I think I know the man;" and presently one of his escort cried out, "They are from Hennikendorf; it is the Knight of the Eagle and his boys."

The Prince's face brightened, and as they came up he smiled on the lads as if they had been his own children, and called them all by their names. With the eldest, who was already twenty one years old, he shook hands, bidding him be as brave as his father, and as virtuous as his mother. "They are your sons, Henning; there is no disputing that to look at them, and yet they have a look of their mother too;" and he thanked the Ritter for having thought of him, and come to give him escort.

"Can I forget, your highness, what you have done for me?" cried Henning.

And they spoke much together, the Prince fondly recalling the services which the Ritter had rendered him in the war with Pomerania at Prenzlów and Ukermünde, when the ball had passed through the Prince's tent, the wind of which had been the cause of the beginning of his present weakness; and at Stettin too, where the Branden-

burgers thought to be first, and yet Henning was there before them. It was at the time when Albrecht Glinde had brought himself to them, but not the town, for the burgesses were awake, and the attack did not succeed.

“It might have been managed,” said the Ritter, who, with the weight of half-a-century upon his shoulders, looked still as fresh and hearty as a young man—“it might have been managed, if your grace had been more lenient that time to Koeln and Berlin; but the burgesses of Stettin thought that——”

“You may be right,” interrupted the Kurprince, seemingly not anxious to have it recalled to his memory; “but you remember what vexation you had when you were Burgomaster of Berlin. Who can please them?”

They were now come to the hillocks, and the Prince asked, “Whose are they? Ask the old shepherd yonder who sleeps beneath them.”

“There are many who remember it well, sir,” answered Henning, with a serious air.

“But it is a long time ago.”

“It is just two and twenty years. Two honest men perished on this spot.”

The Prince was silent, for he saw Henning’s emotion, and he might well guess what the hillocks meant. But the one who had asked the old man came up and said, in a low voice—

“Your highness, the hillocks mark the spot where Johannes Rathenow and Konrad Ryke, two senators of Berlin, were fallen upon by robbers as

they were on their way towards Saxony. They were slain here, but not buried, for their bodies were taken to Berlin, and laid in the vaults under Saint Nicholas."

The Prince dismounted, and approaching the hillocks, he laid one hand on the cross still standing, and his head fell on his breast. Many a painful feeling might well come to his mind, as he asked Henning, in a hollow voice, "Think you that the father of your Elizabeth has been revenged!"

"Your highness, yes, for it was scarcely six weeks after his death when Koepkin Zarnekow was caught by the Kottbussers. He died on the wheel with five of his free companions. Their skulls are yet hanging in chains over the gates of Kottbus."

The Prince shook his head mournfully: "If he could look down upon the world, and on this spot—I mean, if he could look down just now—I think, dear Henning, he would be still more revenged."

Henning understood what he meant.

"He was a worthy man," said the old Prince; "there was not another such in the Mark. Had they been all like he, so undeviatingly honest——"

"It would have been hard to rule," said Henning.

"No, dear sir, if *all* were honest it would not be hard. If *all* were to seek the right earnestly, the right would then be found. Had a prince to

do with straightforward people alone, he, too, could go straightforward, and together they would reach their common aim ; straight as went these two who fell together. In life they differed, but both seeking the right they came upon the same road at last, and together they gained the consummation ; ‘ a consummation,’ he added, in a low voice, ‘ which awaits us all.’”

And he rode forward as though he saw before him the hillock which was one day to cover his own weary limbs. Arrived at the frontier, he turned himself once again, and his hands seemed involuntarily to raise themselves, and his lips to move as if giving his blessing. The words no one heard. Then he shook hands silently with the Ritter, and bent his head to the boys. He looked round no more.

Henning and his sons waited till the train was lost in the distance. He then turned slowly home. Never before had he felt such a weight upon his heart, and yet he was a happy man.

THE END.

